

Palestinians close to signing contracts to buy Jewish properties in west Jerusalem — Tibi

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — An adviser to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said on Sunday that Palestinian businessmen were close to signing contracts to buy at least three Jewish properties in west Jerusalem.

Ahmad Tibi called the deals a reaction to Jews settling in Arab east Jerusalem, an area captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed to west Jerusalem. Palestinians want east Jerusalem as a future capital.

"One of these buildings consists of six floors and is located in a very sensitive and well-known area in west Jerusalem owned by a right-wing Israeli," Mr. Tibi told Reuters.

Mr. Tibi, who declined to identify the Palestinian and Israeli businessmen or the three properties, said: "I was surprised to find out that now the number of Israelis selling their property in west Jerusalem is increasing."

"I would like to know how Israelis will feel when they wake up one morning and find the Palestinian flag raised on buildings in the heart of west Jerusalem and hear Arabic music playing loud from those buildings," Mr. Tibi said.

"I think the Israeli people will begin to question their actions and provocations in east Jerusalem," he said.

Last week Jewish settlers took over two buildings in the Arab Ras Al Amoud neighbourhood of east Jerusalem, deepening

a crisis in peacemaking between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Israel. The settlers raised the Israeli flag over one of the buildings.

Palestinians demanded the immediate eviction of the settlers and the PNA rejected a deal four days later between Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu and the settlers replacing the families who occupied the Arab property with Jewish students.

PNA officials insisted peace deals signed with Israel since 1993 required both sides to refrain from taking unilateral acts that would preempt issues both sides agreed had yet to be negotiated such as Jerusalem.

Israel insists that both sides of Jerusalem are its "united, eternal capital." Its annexation of east Jerusalem was not recognised internationally.

Mr. Tibi and other PNA officials said Palestinians owned 70 per cent of property in west Jerusalem based on documents, some of them predating Israel's establishment in 1948.

"If the Israelis say they buy property in east Jerusalem and simply go and occupy houses there, then the Palestinians would be compelled to act in the same way. What would Israelis feel about that?" Mr. Tibi said.

"The purchase of property in west Jerusalem will be speeded up now in response to Mr. Netanyahu's settlement policies," he said.



Sameh Hadieh is arrested by Israeli police after being prevented from entering his home in Ras Al Amoud along with dozens of angry Palestinians on Sunday, Mr. Hadieh, a Palestinian man who lived in one of the buildings taken over by Jewish settlers in Arab East Jerusalem, tried to enter his home insisting the settlers were squatters (Reuters photo)

Hizbollah leader warns Israel against hitting infrastructure

BEIRUT (AP) — The leader of Hizbollah Sunday warned Israel that his fighters will retaliate if Israel attacks Lebanon's utilities.

"I want to tell this enemy that bombing (Lebanon's) infrastructure will be met with retaliation," Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary-general of Hizbollah, told a rally. "We will not keep quiet about the destruction of our country."

Israel jets hit an electric pylon in Lebanon in August, announcing that the move was "punishment" because the Lebanese Army had intervened in fighting in southern Lebanon.

Israel had bombed an electrical station and water plant during its "Grapes of Wrath" campaign in Lebanon in April 1996.

Such attacks are especially damaging because Lebanon is still rebuilding

from its 1975-90 civil war, which devastated the country.

Sheikh Nasrallah compared the Lebanese guerrillas to Palestinian fighters and said: "I want to tell them that we and our brothers in Palestine are also capable of bringing their entity to a stage where there is no tourism, no economy and no public utilities."

Sheikh Nasrallah spoke at a rally held Sunday in Beirut's southern suburbs to commemorate the death of his eldest son Hadi, 18, a week earlier. Hadi Nasrallah and two comrades were killed in a clash with Israeli troops in south Lebanon.

Tens of thousands of supporters who showed up for the occasion frequently interrupted his speech with cries of "Allahu Akbar," or "God is great," and "Death to Israel."

Sheikh Nasrallah said while Israel owned "war-

planes that can invade our skies, we own martyrs that can invade all their markets, towns and settlements."

Sheikh Nasrallah also attacked the recent visit by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to the region, charging that it was meant to further Israel's goals.

Sheikh Nasrallah said Ms. Albright's characterisation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad as terrorist groups was a compliment.

"Such a testimony from this Jewish old hag is a tribute for Hamas and Islamic Jihad," he said.

Hizbollah has led the campaign to try to drive Israel out of the self-proclaimed "security zone" it set up in southern Lebanon in 1985 to protect from cross-border attacks on its northern settlements.

Israeli delegation arrives in Doha for jurists' meeting

DOHA (AP) — A delegation of 20 Israeli judges, lawyers and legal experts arrived here Sunday to attend a World Jurists Association conference.

The Israelis are hoping to meet with Qatari officials on the sidelines.

"This is important to us. We will try to meet our brothers in Qatar," said Zaki Kamal, an Israeli Arab who is deputy head of the delegation.

The delegation is headed by the former chief justice of Israel's supreme court, Meir Shamgar.

Qatar and Oman broke ranks with their Gulf neighbours and established trade ties with Israel in 1995.

But relations with the Jewish state have deteriorated since the election in May 1996 of hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Qatar is hosting a conference in November designed to promote Israeli-Arab economic cooperation. Most Arab states, with the exception of Oman, have threatened to boycott because of the lack of progress in peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

The Israeli delegation to the jurists' conference is scheduled to return to Israel next Sunday.

Egyptian president rules out pardon for convicted Israeli spy

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Sunday said he will not pardon an Israeli who was sentenced to 15 years in jail with hard labour in August for spying for the Jewish state.

"After everything they have done? How will I explain it to the Egyptian people and to the Egyptian judicial authorities?" Mr. Mubarak told reporters who asked him if he would consider pardoning Azzam.

"I have not issued pardons except for a collective pardon. Why should I pardon him specifically and not someone else," Mr. Mubarak said.

"If everyone like him committed the same crime was pardoned he could carry out another crime," Mr. Mubarak said.

Azzam's brother, Sami,

pleaded with Mr. Mubarak to free the accused and not let Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hardline peace process policies influence his decision.

"We are requesting from the honourable President Mubarak who is a great man and has a big heart," Sami Azzam told Israel Radio. "If there are problems between the countries, Mr. Mubarak has complaints against the prime minister... we are not responsible for this, the prime minister is. We are asking this honourable president to make a humanitarian gesture."

Mr. Mubarak himself appeared to accuse the Israeli government, charging that it "made many mistakes and mishandled" the case of Azzam, an Israeli Druze who was sentenced to 15 years in jail by an

Egyptian state security court on August 31 five months after his trial opened here.

"They made many mistakes. They acted arrogantly. They have to assume the responsibility," Mr. Mubarak said.

He charged that Azzam had "insulted the Egyptian judicial authorities."

"Egypt's justice system is one of the most honest and fair in the world," Mr. Mubarak said.

Earlier this month Mr. Mubarak refused to play postman for Mr. Netanyahu who sent the Egyptian leader a note in Hebrew to be passed on to Azzam.

Mr. Mubarak, according to Egypt's government press, returned the letter to Mr. Netanyahu who has pledged to do everything possible to seek Azzam's release.

Two senior Israeli ministers make new push for creation of left-right national unity government

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Two senior Israeli ministers renewed calls over the weekend for the creation of a left-right national unity government to steer the country through the crisis to the peace process.

Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani met with opposition Labour Party leader Ehud Barak Sunday to try to talk him into considering joining such a government alongside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of the right-wing Likud bloc.

One of Mr. Netanyahu's inner circle, Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, came out for the first time Saturday in favour of a unity cabinet, saying achievement of a broad national consensus was "a necessity" to get through the current crisis.

Following his talks with Mr. Kahalani, Mr. Barak said there would have to be "a radical change in policy" on the part of Mr. Netanyahu before a national unity government could be possible.

But Mr. Kahalani was not dissuaded, telling reporters that the contacts with Labour were only beginning.

Uzi Baram, a close Labour ally of Mr. Barak who had previously been staunchly opposed to a national unity government, also eased his position last week, saying such an option could be considered under the right circumstances.

The idea of a national

unity government has been floated repeatedly since Mr. Netanyahu came to power last year at the head of a coalition of right-wing and religious parties pledging to slow down the Israeli-Arab peace process in order to better guarantee Israel's security interests.

Since the elections, relations with Arab states and the Palestinians have deteriorated steadily, plunging into full crisis in March when Mr. Netanyahu ordered construction of a major new Jewish housing project on disputed land in the occupied Jerusalem.

The crisis has prevented the start of so-called final status negotiations which are to tackle the core Israeli-Palestinian issues

of the eventual creation of a Palestinian state, its borders, the future of Jerusalem and the fate of Jewish settlements in occupied areas.

Several months ago former Labour leader Shimon Peres and Likud's Ariel Sharon launched an initiative for a national unity government, but it was largely dismissed as an attempt by both to salvage their personal political careers.

Following a spate of new terrorist bombings in Jerusalem which led Mr. Netanyahu to suspend application of peace agreements already signed with the Palestinians, the idea resurfaced and the presence of Hanegbi in the National Unity Camp led

credibility to the effort.

The religious party Shas, which accounts for 10 of the Netanyahu coalition's 67-seat majority in the 120-member parliament, has also come out in favour of a unity government.

Despite his tough handling of the Palestinian crisis and his refusal to budge on the central issue of settlements, Mr. Netanyahu has in recent months moved closer to Labour on the ideological front by acknowledging the necessity of giving up territory to obtain a permanent peace accord with the Palestinians.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10...A Show With the Mouse
14:30...Cowboys of the Moo Mesa
15:00...Gillette Sports Special
15:30...Deep Water Haven
16:00...Animal Show
16:30...Ocean Girls
17:15...French Programmes
19:00...News in French
19:15...French programme
19:30...News Headline
19:35...Neighbours
20:00...Comedy — Murphy Brown
20:30...Babylon 5
21:10...Highlander
22:00...News in English
22:35...Emergency Room
23:15...Homicide

PRAYER TIMES

04:01...Fajr
05:19...Sunrise/Duha
11:28...Dhuh
14:56...Asr
17:38...Maghreb
18:56...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swiffield, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to drop slightly with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds northwesterly moderate. In

Aqaba, winds will be northerly

moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.

Amman...17/30

Aqaba...24/37

Deserts...16/33

Jordan Valley...22/35

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 32, Aqaba 36 Humidity

readings: Amman 26 per cent,

Aqaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Mazharab...820425

Dr. Wisam Hziyab...748563

Dr. Munther Al Khatib...839868

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyib...620115

Firas pharmacy...661912

Ferdows pharmacy...677336

Al Asera pharmacy...637055

Nairoukh pharmacy...623672

Al Salam pharmacy...636737

Yacoub pharmacy...644945

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PRIME MINISTER RECEIVES SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIAL: Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Salam Majali Sunday receives Chief of the South African Defence Force George Meiring and South African Ambassador Henry Benny Nato De Bruyn, and discusses bilateral relations and issues of common concern. General Meiring earlier talked with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai Kaabneh (Petra photo)

Preparations underway for Jordanian-Libyan committee

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-Libyan Higher Joint Committee will convene in Libya next month to discuss cooperation in economic, social, cultural, industrial, and other important fields. Ministry of Industry and Trade and Supply Secretary General Mohammad Bani Hani announced Sunday.

After a preparatory meeting, Dr. Bani Hani said establishing a direct maritime line between Aqaba and Libyan ports and sending Jordanian teachers to work in Libyan schools will be among the main topics of discussion.

The joint committee, which will be co-chaired by the two prime ministers, is also scheduled to discuss the prospects of cooperation in the fields of agriculture, tourism, joint investment projects, investment protection, telecommunications, and the registration

of Jordanian-made drugs and their marketing in Libya, as well as providing medical treatment for Libyan nationals in Jordanian hospitals, according to Dr. Bani Hani.

The preparatory committee comprises representatives of the ministries of interior, tourism, culture, education, health, and agriculture, he stated.

A meeting at the level of ministers and technicians to prepare for the joint committee meeting is due to be held in Amman on Sept. 24 and will be co-chaired by Minister of Industry and Trade and Supply Hani Mulki and his Libyan counterpart, he said.

According to Dr. Bani Hani, trade is now at a low level, with the balance in favour of Libya, but Jordan will seek to increase the volume of its national exports.

In the first six months of

Workshop calls for creation of women's shelters for protection from violence

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Government officials, security authorities, and non-governmental organisations heard calls from various social sectors to work toward the creation of women's shelters as an alternative to prison during a one-day workshop on "Women Imprisoned to Protect Their Lives."

Many women are forced to serve indefinite terms in the Kingdom's correctional facilities for what the state terms "administrative detention," but what is in actuality protection from being killed by family members.

Minister of Social Development Mohammad Mamser, in his opening speech, said the ministry is working on a project to establish a women's shelter centre to host women who have finished their prison term and have no place to go.

Dr. Mamser said the shelter will work to rehabilitate these women so that they be independent.

Public Security Department (PSD) Director Lieu-

tenant General Nasouh Moheiddin, who also addressed the gathering, said his department was working on a similar project for women whose lives are threatened or are subjected to domestic violence.

"The last two decades have witnessed an increase in violence, mainly in the numbers of crimes committed in the name of honour, which stems from the cultural values and beliefs that dominate our social conduct," the police chief said.

He also said the new centre, which will be constructed next to Jewdeh Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre at a cost of approximately JD2 million, will "hopefully offer an alternative for women victims of family violence who are kept at the police correctional centres."

"Most women at our centres suffer from psychological and social pressures, and feel humiliated and frustrated because they are kept with women who committed crimes, and this reflects negatively on their behaviour," he explained.

Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, president of the Human

Rights Forum for Women's Rights, presented a similar project for a women's shelter, stating that efforts are being exerted with the PSD and the Ministry of Social Development to unify the suggested proposals and obtain funding.

"Our aim is to protect women by transferring them from the prisons to the shelter, which will be a different and new hope for them," she added.

According to Lieut. Col. Bashir Belbeisi of the PSD, who conducted a study on 25 women imprisoned to protect their lives, "if these women are released from detention, their destiny is to be killed by a family member."

He said the study revealed that the highest percentage of this number were married women aged between 19 and 27, with poor education and living conditions.

"It is unfair for these women to be detained at our centres because they are not getting an opportunity in life and are mixing with convicts, and we have to find an alternative for them," he said.

Police records of the past 12 years show that crimes of honour have ranked highest among all murders committed in Jordan. On average, 25 women are killed each year in the Kingdom in the name of honour.

A study conducted by the PSD in 1994 indicated that there were 4,962 domestic violence cases against women registered with the police during 1991 and 1992.

UNICEF area representative Dorrit Alopaeus-Stahl said "we must act now to try to ensure women's rights and to provide them with the appropriate environment, which is one of our organisation's aims."

"Today's girls are the women of tomorrow, and if you turn a blind eye to the plight of women, because they are women, you turn a blind eye to the future of the girls," Ms. Alopaeus-Stahl told the participants.

In Jordan, she maintained, 30 per cent of all murder cases are "labelled crimes of honour and most life stories of the battered wife go on for years and decades, with no recourse for the women."

Ina'am Asha, from the Ministry of Social Development, presented a paper explaining the ministry's role in caring for and rehabilitating women at their centres.

Ms. Asha said the ministry this year has helped 34 women in the Jewdeh and Qafqafa correctional and rehabilitation centres by appointing attorneys, arranging marriages, and offering financial support and medical services.

Judge Mohammad Tarawneh, from the Court of First Instance, pointed to the civil and penal laws, which he said still favour men.

In his paper on the legal aspects of detaining women, Mr. Tarawneh said the current legislation, written 37 years ago, cannot cope with the rapid advancement of the modern world.

The event was organised by the PSD, the Human Rights Forum for Women's Rights, and the Ministry of Social Development, and was supported by UNICEF.

Minister reviews election preparations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Interior Nafith Rashid Sunday chaired a meeting attended by the district governors of the Kingdom to review preparations for the 1997 general elections, scheduled to take place Nov. 4.

A statement after the meeting said the participants discussed facilities for allowing citizens to obtain the voting cards that are a prerequisite for voting.

During the meeting, Mr. Rashid said it is of paramount importance to see closer cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the district governors on the one hand, and the other public and government institutions on the other to ensure the success of the upcoming elections.

He also stressed the need for the governors to set up voting centres within reach of

the rural population, adding that the ministry has made plans to provide the necessary number of officials to take charge of the voting procedures in the governorates.

Meanwhile, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Sunday reported that the Jordanian Socialist Baath Party has decided to take part in the elections.

A party statement said that the decision was made because the party members wish to follow the course of democracy and hope to reach Parliament, which the party considers the constitutional platform.

The statement urged all eligible citizens to take part in the elections and choose the persons most capable of shouldering their responsibilities to the nation.

Grant money used to reduce ozone-harmful emissions

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has received a total of \$8 million to date from a general fund created at a 1987 international conference, which has helped local industries replace ozone-harmful substances with environmentally sounder materials in their manufacturing processes, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan announced Sunday.

During the opening session of a meeting organised by the General Corporation for Environmental Protection (GCEP) to discuss measures to protect the ozone layer, Mr. Kreishan said at least 20 industrial businesses have already benefited from the grants and others are in the process of receiving aid.

The fund was established to help countries implement necessary modifications in

their production processes. According to the Montreal Protocol, which established the fund, certain chemicals, such as chlorofluorocarbons, create apertures in the ozone layer, a gas layer that protects the earth from dangerous levels of ultraviolet rays.

Mr. Kreishan said Jordanian companies have become aware of the need to substitute ozone-harmful substances with similar, but friendlier materials.

Beginning next month, the Mithyeh Haddad firm and the Qala Ghazi company, both of which engage in the production of sponge and other ozone-harmful substances, will begin substituting safer materials in the refinery process.

The refinery is now building a factory, expected to be completed by the end of 1997, for the production of a new, safer gas at the overall cost of \$1 million, with World Bank assistance of \$805,000, he added.

Montreal protocol now taking measures to substitute the ozone-harmful substances.

Chemical substances used in refrigeration and air conditioning have been found to be detrimental to the protective atmosphere layer, and Jordan has been requesting aid to finance safer substances, the minister added.

Abdul Wahab Zou'bi, director general of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company, stated that the company is committed to substituting safer materials in the refinery process.

The refinery is now building a factory, expected to be completed by the end of 1997, for the production of a new, safer gas at the overall cost of \$1 million, with World Bank assistance of \$805,000, he added.

Seminar examines NGO principles in light of proposed EU assistance

By Hasher Majoka
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The European volunteer group Prometheus-Europe Sunday ended a two-day seminar on establishing and efficiently managing non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with the goal of preparing Jordanian organisations for future European Union (EU) cooperation.

The seminar covered a wide range of topics, including the founding principles of such organisations with a special emphasis on transparency and efficiency, managing human resources, and starting and developing local, regional, and global partnerships.

"Prometheus-Europe is a non-profit association, entirely composed of and led by volunteers with 43 branches worldwide," said Frank Biancheri, the president of the organisation.

The organisation focuses on regional integration and trans-national cooperation in such fields as education,

urban development, and environmental awareness, he said.

Mr. Biancheri said the current series of seminars being held in Amman and other Mediterranean capitals are in view of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Programme.

This programme, which groups together 15 EU member states and 12 countries of the southern Mediterranean basin, stretching from Turkey to Morocco, seeks to create a giant free-trade area comprising the current EU and these Mediterranean states by 2010, he said.

For this purpose, the EU has earmarked \$5.4 billion for the next five years in development assistance to these countries, starting last year, he said.

Jordan is in the process of signing an agreement with the EU that would enable it to receive aid under this programme, he added.

He pointed out that of the total amount, approximately \$300-400 million are to be spent on "decentralised

cooperation," i.e., to be given out by the NGOs rather than governmental organisations.

He said his group is trying to ensure transparency and efficiency in this regard in two ways. First, they are widely distributing information about the existence of such aid from EU. Second, they intend to monitor and understand the impact of this aid on the community development and thus help tailor future aid projects accordingly.

"Our main objective is the strengthening and development of the Mediterranean civil society, which is indispensable for the emergence of real democracy and improvement in Euro-Mediterranean relations," Mr. Biancheri said.

The NGOs and other trans-national actors can play a leading role in this regard and that is why Prometheus-Europe is organising local seminars on the successful establishment and management of NGOs, he concluded.

Conference to address implications of EU-Jordanian partnership

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In anticipation of the pending signing of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreement between Jordan and the European Union (EU), a conference addressing the agreement's dimensions and its potential impact on Jordan opens today at the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI).

The two-day conference, hosted by the ACI and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, will feature a lecture on Europe's perspective of the agreement's implications for Jordan by Tanja Friedrichs, a European Commission expert on Europe's commercial trade policy and trade in services.

Today's sessions will include discussions on the partnership's implications for Jordan and Jordanian-European trade relations and the Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area, and will cover each topic from both Jordanian and European perspectives.

Speakers will include Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Amari, Director of Technical Support Unit at the Ministry of Planning Yusuf Mansour, Ministry of Supply Secretary General Mohammad Smadi, and Head of the European Commission Delegation to Amman Yves Gazzo, who have all been active in negotiating the terms of the association agreement, expected to be signed within the next two months. The agreement will be effective as of Jan. 1, 1999.

The signing was expected more than a year ago, but was

only initiated in April on the sidelines of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Malta.

Disagreement over issues such as intellectual property rights forced the two sides to postpone the agreement for several months, and, more recently, a protest from Spain over Jordan's tomato paste export quota caused a further delay.

A number of representatives from the country's industrial, banking, and service sectors will also address particular Jordanian concerns about the agreement, which many say could put some of Jordan's industries, particularly its multi-million dinar pharmaceutical industry, at a short-term disadvantage on international markets. Still others have contended that signing the agreement is a "political signal" to the World Bank and circumvents any real benefits to Jordan.

Proponents of the agreement contend that it will facilitate Jordan's bid for membership in the World Trade Organisation and that it will encourage more direct European investment in the Kingdom, provide substantially better access to EU markets for agricultural and industrial products, and facilitate technology transfer.

The conference opens with remarks from Deputy Prime Minister of Development Affairs Jawad Anani, Mr. Gazzo, Minister of Industry and Trade Hani Mulki, Konrad Adenauer Foundation Resident Representative Olaf Koendgen, German Ambassador Peter Menke, and ACI Chairman Khalidoun Abu Hassan.

Science week ends with recommendations for economy

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Bringing together local and international experts to discuss various national issues and devise recommendations to strengthen the economy was the major goal behind the Fifth Science Week, said Said Aloush, president of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) in his closing speech Saturday.

The week focused on the areas of enhancing Jordanian competitiveness, promoting quality, increasing productivity, and introducing transparency and accountability.

The activities included a visit to Sahab Industrial City to show the visitors the industrial sites of the country and Jordan's achievements, along with the difficulties and challenges it faces and the means of overcoming them, Dr. Aloush said in his speech.

A national work programme was introduced comprising the following fields of action:

1. Legislation, including: -the acceleration of a law of competitiveness and prevention of monopolisation, -the acceleration of a law of protection of intellectual property rights, -the modernisation of the civil service to strengthen transparency, quality, and

accountability in governmental services, and -the introduction of a transparency charter to strengthen behaviour in society.

2. Organisation arrangements, including: -establishing an industrial policy unit, -establishing a creativity and invention unit, -establishing sector work groups, -establishing a Jordanian transparency society, and -creating an intensive system including an annual prize entitled "The Jordanian Excellence Prize."

3. Development of human resources, including university programmes relevant to the labour market, upgrading workers' competence, and developing training programmes.

4. Research, including the provision of supporting financial facilities and scientific centres.

5. Presenting policies that provide strategies to refine governmental achievements and draw major goals annually.

6. User-friendly information centres that provide national information related to laws and legislation.

The Fifth Scientific Week, entitled "Enhancing Jordanian Competitiveness, Quality, Productivity, Transparency, and Accountability," opened last Monday under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan.

The Crown Prince, in his opening speech, said "we are living in a world that is increasingly shrinking. Globalism is a reality that no one can ignore."

"We have gone a considerable way in integrating our economy into the global economy," he added.

Jordan has already initiated an association agreement with the European Union, which provides substantial opportunities for economic, cultural, and political cooperation with 26 European and Mediterranean countries, he said in a speech delivered on his behalf by Jawad Anani, Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs.

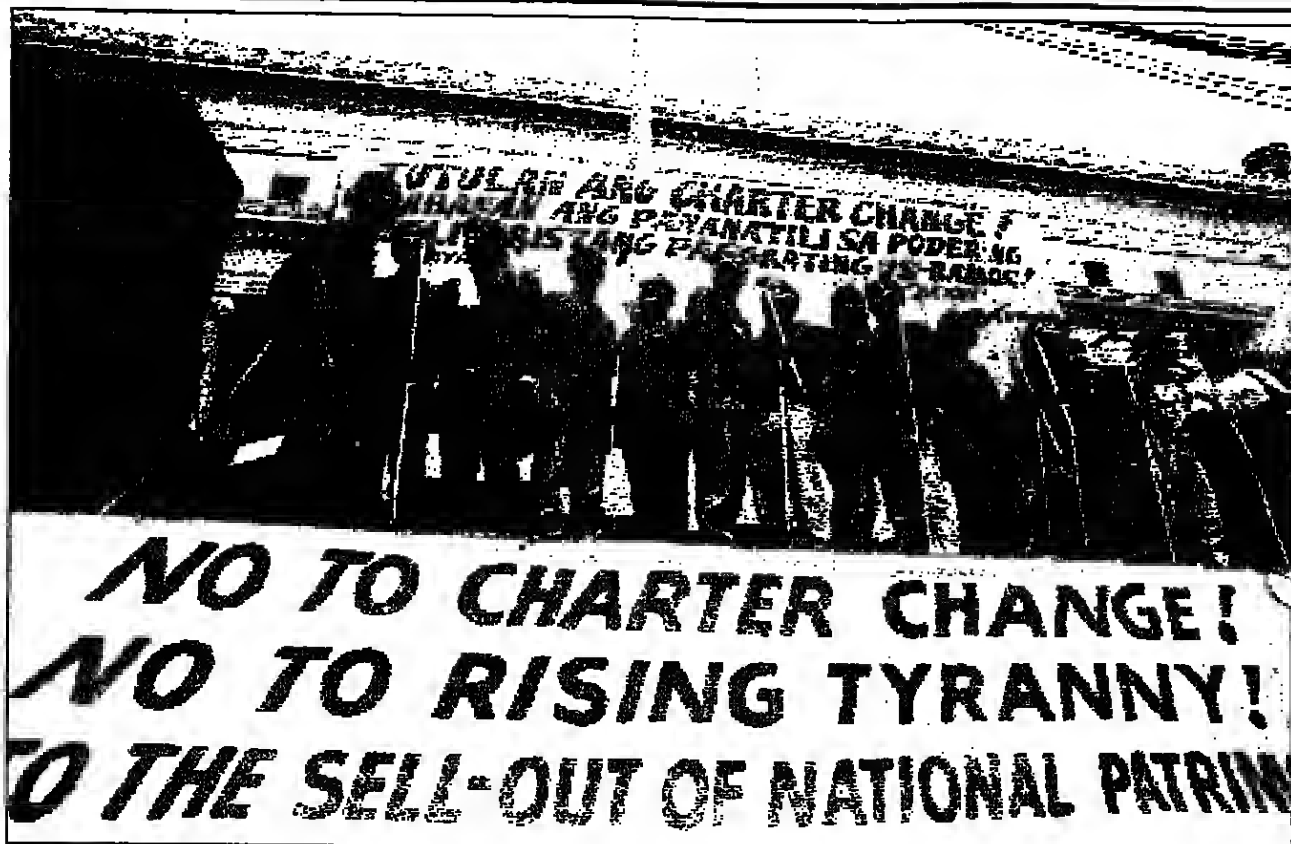
The Kingdom has also started its accession process to the World Trade Organisation, the Crown Prince noted.

The annual science week, first held in 1993, has covered such topics as self-sufficiency, national policy and defensive resources, optimal use of land resources, and integration of human and natural resources.

The RSS sponsored the activities of the week in conjunction with other organisations, including the University of Jordan, the Higher Council for Science and Technology, the Jordan Armed Forces, and the Institute of Public Administration.

WHAT'S GOING ON

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|--|---|--|
| <p>FILM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Milou en Mai" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, at 8:30 p.m. <p>LECTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Israel and the Arab National Security (in Arabic) by Dr. Ahmad Abdul Rahman of Egypt at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:50 p.m. <p>CHINESE FILM FESTIVAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Divorce" (which commemorates the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. <p>DARAT AL FUNKUN SUMMER '97 FESTIVAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Graphics by Rana Nasir of Iraq, Ziad Dalkoul of Syria, and Najia Mehadi at the | <p>South Hall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Qailoka at the Middle Hall. * Sculpture, drawings, and paintings by Jordanian artist Rajwa Ali. * Works by contemporary Arab artists at the Blue House. * Paintings by children of Zarqa reflecting on the problem of pollution at the Byzantine church. <p>EXHIBITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Works by Khilief Mahmoud Khilief at Hamoumabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Oct. 2 (Tel. 5536098). * Works by Syrian artist Dr. Faieh Moudarres at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street, | <p>until Sept. 25 (Tel. 5537598).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Exhibition of photographs about the life of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman until Sept. 23. * Works by Darleen Wilkerson entitled "Arab Madinas in Batik" at the Jordan Crafts Development Centre (Al Aydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle, until Sept. 25 (Tel. 644555). * Paintings exhibition entitled "La Radioactive" at the French Cultural Centre, until Sept. 30. * Paintings by Palestinian artists entitled "Palestine the Reality and the Dream" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 2 (except Tuesdays). |
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Filipino activists chant slogans criticising moves by supporters of Philippine President Fidel Ramos to change the constitution so he can run for reelection during a massive protest rally in Manila Sunday. Mr. Ramos tried to diffuse the protest by saying he will step down when his term ends next year (Reuter photo)

600,000 warn Ramos to stick to Filipino constitution

MANILA (AFP) — Six hundred thousand people staged a rally in Manila Sunday which sent a strong warning to President Fidel Ramos that he must keep his word and stand down next year.

The rally, led by the Roman Catholic Church, went ahead despite a promise by Mr. Ramos that he would not stand in the presidential election next May. Mr. Ramos said however the constitution must be revised "without delay" and criticised the church.

Yellow ribbons that were a symbol of the campaign to force late dictator Ferdinand Marcos to stand down in 1986 again covered trees of Luneta Park where the massive demonstration took place.

Sunday was the 25th anniversary of the declaration of martial rule by Ferdinand Marcos, toppled in a 1986 popular revolt led by Mr. Ramos, ex-president Corason Aquino and Archbishop Jaime Sin.

Moves to change the constitution led to fears that Mr. Ramos may be seeking a second term or to extend his current six-year term.

The powerful Catholic Church described the manoeuvres

as moves by an "aspiring dictatorship."

But Mr. Ramos appeared to defuse the crisis when he returned to the Philippines from a European tour Saturday and said he would not stand again and that he opposed changing the constitution until after the presidential election next May.

On Sunday, Mr. Ramos insisted the 1987 constitution must be changed by an elected convention after the presidential poll. The 69-year-old former general told a rally of 4,000 supporters the charter was "no longer responsive to the needs of the 21st century."

Mr. Ramos has often made contradictory comments however and not all his opponents are convinced that the moves are over.

One banner put it in blunt terms: "Martial Law, Never Again."

"While we in the opposition appreciate the last efforts of President Ramos to abide by the people's rejection of charter amendments, we feel that the people must remain vigilant to any machination against the constitution," said opposition Senator Blas Ople.

Left wing activists burned an effigy of Mr. Ramos at their demonstration in Manila, while marching bands led hundreds of thousands to the main rally, though numbers dwindled after heavy rain started. Radio reports said thousands of other protesters were at other assembly points across the country.

The main Luneta Park stage was surrounded by a nuns, monks and policemen, who said they wanted to keep out infiltrators amid a reported assassination plot against Mrs. Aquino and Arch. Sin.

Police dismantled a petrol bomb at a pedestrian underpass nearby and arrested a man carrying pyrotechnics, but police reported no other incidents.

Arch. Sin called for "reconciliation" after Mr. Ramos' latest statement.

"We now pray for national reconciliation," the Manila archbishop told the rally.

"If in heat of passionate love for our country and for our democracy words have been exchanged which have caused undue personal hurt, we humbly ask the Lord and each affected person, including the president, for forgiveness," he said.

But Arch. Sin received loud applause as he warned: "This is his last statement. I hope he does not change it any longer."

Mr. Ramos told a news conference a constitutional convention would have to be convened by a law passed by Congress in time for members to be elected during the May 11 polls.

Asked if he wanted the new constitution to abolish the term limit on the presidency or turn the presidential system into a parliamentary one, Mr. Ramos said that would be up to the convenors.

Mr. Ramos attacked the rally organisers for allegedly involving students and children in the protest movement.

"Our hard-won gains now hang in the balance," he said, urging the protesters to stop "exploiting children."

"We must stop infusing Philippine politics into their minds," he said. "Let us prepare our youths to adequately cope with the challenges of the future."



A Filipino child wearing a headband saying "No to charter change" attends with his parents a church-backed rally in Manila Sunday to register their opposition to a second term for President Fidel Ramos (Reuter photo)

Clinton to face campaign finance review

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — The Justice Department is reviewing allegations that President Bill Clinton made improper fund-raising phone calls from the White House, seeking to decide whether to appoint a special prosecutor, U.S. officials said Saturday.

"The Justice Department is reviewing whether allegations that the president illegally solicited campaign contributions on federal property should warrant a preliminary investigation under the independent counsel act," Justice Department spokesman Myron Martin told Reuters.

The president has said he does not remember whether he made any political fund-raising phone calls, and the White House believes that Mr. Clinton is exempt from the law barring federal employees from soliciting campaign contributions on federal property.

"We understand the Department of Justice is in the process of determining whether a preliminary investigation is warranted," Lanny Davis, White House special counsel, said in a statement.

"We are cooperating and we will continue to cooperate with the Department of Justice to ensure it has all the information it needs. We are confident that no laws were broken," Mr. Davis said.

Mr. Clinton's private attorney David Kendall said in a statement issued in Washington: "No laws were broken and any kind of enforcement action would be absolutely unprecedented."

"We intend to cooperate with the Department of Justice and this matter should be resolved speedily," Mr. Kendall added.

The news broke on a day when Mr. Clinton was seeking to raise \$950,000 for the Democratic Party at three fund-raising events in San Francisco.

The preliminary 30-day review of allegations against Mr. Clinton began sometime in the past five days and was approved by Attorney General Janet Reno. A Justice Department source said. After the 30 days are up, Ms. Reno must decide whether to proceed to a formal 90-day investigation of the matter.

This puts Mr. Clinton in the same category as Vice-President Al Gore, whose alleged campaign finance abuses are currently under a 30-day review by Ms. Reno that ends on Oct. 3.

It is generally assumed at the White House that Ms. Reno will order the 90-day review in Mr. Gore's case. With that in mind, Mr. Gore Friday hired two private attorneys: Jim Neal of Nash-

Report: Clinton may allow sale of nuclear technology to China

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton is likely to lift the ban on the sale of sensitive nuclear technology to China, the magazine U.S. News and World Report reports.

A 1985 federal law forbids U.S. corporations from selling nuclear technology to China until the president "certifies" that China has stopped selling weapon technology to third nations such as Pakistan and Iran.

Mr. Clinton however is likely to give China this certification during the upcoming United States summit with China in October, the weekly magazine reports.

The change in foreign policy is the direct result of years of intense lobbying from corporations such as Westinghouse, General Electric, Bechtel, and ABB Combustion Engineering.

Facing a declining demand in the U.S. for their wares, these companies that produce nuclear reactor or help build reactor sites want to help build 20 Chinese atomic power stations, with a price tag totalling some \$40 billion, according to the magazine.

"If we don't have an industry in China, I don't think the (industry in the United States) will survive," said Howard Pierce, a top corporate official at ABB.

Mr. Clinton, a long-time family friend and adviser and former Watergate prosecutor, and George Frumpton, a Washington-based attorney and former assistant secretary of the Interior Department who has worked with Mr. Gore in the past on environmental issues.

Their job is to extract Mr. Gore from legal troubles with the potential to jeopardise his bid to succeed President Bill Clinton in the 2000 presidential election.

The White House has admitted that Mr. Gore made 86 phone calls to Democratic donors soliciting campaign funds, but denies any wrongdoing on grounds that Mr. Gore, like Mr. Clinton, is exempt from the law.

Afghan factions battle in north

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — The purist Islamic Taliban militia battled its foes in northern Afghanistan Sunday, but each side gave conflicting accounts of the outcome.

A spokesman for opposition leader Ahmad Shah Masood told the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) that opposition forces had retaken the town of Hairatan on the Uzbekistan border.

The spokesman, based in the eastern Iranian city of Mashhad, said the opposition now controlled the area between Hairatan and the opposition capital of Mazar-e-Sharif, 75 kilometres away.

However, a Taliban spokesman denied the loss of Hairatan, saying Taliban forces there had repulsed an opposition attack.

There was no independent account of the fighting.

The Taliban spokesman, quoted by AIP, also reported artillery exchanges with forces loyal to opposition leader General Abdul Rashid Dostum in northern Balkh province.

He said the shelling, at Kamperak and Shahrak vil-

lages, about 15 kilometres north of Mazar-e-Sharif, followed what the Taliban said was a victory against Gen. Dostum Saturday.

Taliban-controlled Radio Kabul said pro-Taliban forces led by Hazrat Mohammad Gardezi had killed 50 of Gen. Dostum's troops and captured 300, including several senior officers.

The broadcast late Saturday said Gen. Dostum's forces in Balkh province had been "completely defeated."

AIP said 15 Taliban fighters had been killed and several wounded in Saturday's fighting.

Opposition spokesmen could not immediately be reached for comment.

Gen. Dostum arrived back in his former bastion of Mazar-e-Sharif about 10 days ago after a Taliban advance towards the northern city touched off clashes among opposition factions there.

His rival for control of the mainly ethnic Uzbek Junbish-e-Milli faction, General Abdul Malik, made a short-lived alliance with the Taliban in May to force Gen. Dostum into exile.

Gen. Malik is now believed to have withdrawn

his forces to Shiberghan, 125 kilometres west of Mazar-e-Sharif.

The purist Taliban, which holds about two thirds of Afghanistan including the capital Kabul, wants to impose its strict version of Islamic law throughout the country.

Meanwhile, international aid agencies evacuated most of their foreign staff Saturday from the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif, the opposition stronghold looted by renegade defenders and threatened by the advancing forces of the Taliban religious army.

A U.N. plane, the first to land, brought 15 U.N. employees and three aid workers to the Pakistani capital, Islamabad.

A Red Cross plane landed later in the day with 17 workers from the Geneva-based humanitarian agency, then went back to get 17 more.

The evacuees were the first foreigners fleeing Mazar-e-Sharif, which fell into chaos earlier this month when the Taliban looked close to capturing it. Mazar-e-Sharif is the largest city in northern Afghanistan and

the headquarters of an alliance opposed to the Taliban.

The United Nations and the Red Cross tried for days to withdraw their staff from the city, but fighting in and around Mazar-e-Sharif hampered efforts.

Aid workers bound for Islamabad, some with their families, were flown Friday by helicopter to Sheberghan, a city west of Mazar-e-Sharif. The U.N. and Red Cross planes then carried them to Pakistan Saturday.

In all, 52 aid workers were expected to arrive in Islamabad Saturday.

U.N. and Red Cross officials said the helicopter that flew the evacuees from Mazar-e-Sharif to Sheberghan was provided by one of the main factions controlling the northern stronghold.

They said that flight had to be cleared by the fighting factions before the evacuation could take place.

The United Nations said the evacuees were non-essential staff, and that two expatriates remained behind. The Red Cross said it would carry on its normal duties in Mazar despite the evacuation.

Safety system may have been off at U.K. rail crash

LONDON (R) — A vital fail-safe system may not have been working on the stretch of line where Britain's worst rail crash for almost a decade occurred Friday, Sunday newspapers reported.

They quoted a spokesman for Railtrack, the company responsible for track maintenance, as saying the reliability of the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system on the line into London's Paddington Station was "open to question."

Six people were killed and 13 seriously injured when an express train packed with 500 passengers slammed into a freight train in the western suburbs of London.

The driver of the express train was released on police bail Saturday morning after being arrested by police conducting a manslaughter inquiry.

He earlier passed a breathalyser test for alcohol and no charges have been brought against him, a police spokesman said.

Police named the six dead who included Swedish Radio correspondent Marcus Olander. The eight most seriously injured passengers are being detained in hospital.

Workers began removing the crumpled carriages from the line with cranes and special lifting equipment. Train services out of Paddington were suspended.

Investigators studying Britain's worst crash since 35 died in a 1988 pile-up are studying the data recorder from the signal box controlling the area at the time of Friday's crash, officials said.

This "black box" can pinpoint the state of the signals, the position of the trains at the time of impact and where the two trains were in the final moments before the accident.

Investigators will now be able to study computerised printouts to piece together the train's last moments and decide if human error or a technical fault was to blame.

The ATP should prevent trains from going through a red light by sending signals to a computer in the drivers' cab.

But the independent Sunday quoted a senior official of the drivers' union ASLEF as saying the system was certainly not working.

"We know the ATP was not turned on because it was in such a state of disrepair," he said. "As a result, the driver was robbed of an essential safeguard against human or other error."

U.S. Air Force probes B-1 crash

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, South Dakota (R) — U.S. Air Force officials Saturday were investigating the sixth crash of a military aircraft in a week — this one involving a B-1 bomber that went down Friday in south-east Montana.

All four crew members aboard the air force B-1h bomber were killed when the plane crashed, leaving a trail of debris several hundred feet long in the Montana prairie. In all 16 Americans have died in random U.S. military crashes since Sept. 13.

Officials at Ellsworth Air Force Base, where the plane was assigned, were scheduled to hold a news conference Saturday afternoon to discuss their investigation of the crash, which occurred about 40 kilometres north of Alzada, Montana.

Senior airman Jennifer Blake, a spokeswoman at Ellsworth, said investigators had not yet determined whether the crew had sent any distress calls or whether they had attempted to eject from the bomber.

Air force officials said the plane was on a routine training flight over the powder river military operations area, but Mr. Blake said investigators had not yet been able to determine whether the crew were flying a low- or high-altitude mission.

Kaye Nelson, who runs the Valley Inn and Bar in Alzada, said she often sees air force planes flying near the town and most fly at low altitudes. She said Friday's crash sent a thick plume of smoke into the air that could be seen miles away in Alzada.

"I looked out the bar window and it was a big black, mushroom-type cloud," Ms. Nelson said.

Officials said there were no bombs on board the swing-wing B-1 "Lancer," which was designed originally to carry nuclear bombs to the heart of Soviet territory in a world war.

Killed in the crash were the plane's pilot, Col. Anthony Beat, 28th bomb wing vice commander Maj. Clay Culver, assistant operations officer Maj. Kirk

Cakerice, assistant operations officer, and Capt. Gary Everett, weapons system officer. No ages or hometowns were released.

Friday's crash prompted air force officials to move up a suspension of all training flights, which was ordered by Defence Secretary William Cohen to study safety after the recent rash of accidents. The 24-hour training halt was rescheduled for Monday instead of next Friday.

"On Monday, we will stop flying training and exercise missions and focus intently on what we do and how we do it," Gen. Richard Hawley, the head of the air force's Air Combat Command, said in a statement. "We need to determine why these incidents happen and how to prevent any more mishaps."

President Bill Clinton expressed his deep condolences to the families of the airmen killed and said he continued to have "the highest confidence" in the air force and all U.S. military services.

Pacific Forum ends with row over greenhouse gases, security concerns

RAROTONGA (AFP) — Pacific nations ended their annual summit here this weekend with a communique rich in their fears that sea-levels will rise and drown many of their states, while their sovereignty remained vulnerable to sudden external threats.

The 28th South Pacific Forum saw 14 island prime ministers and presidents, plus the leaders of Australia and New Zealand, meet to produce a detailed communique.

The adoption of an economic action plan to halt the steady deterioration in the economies of many states, was seen as the major long-term achievement of the forum.

"Leaders agreed that the implementation of the action plan would require strong commitment by all members to create a policy environment to encourage private sector development and enhance the competitiveness of their economies," the communique said.

The forum had gone into retreat Thursday on Aitutaki Island, north of here, and quickly became deadlocked over the issue of carbon emissions from the industrial countries. They are believed to be creating a greenhouse effect leading to sea-level rises.

Smaller island states, almost all consisting, either wholly or in part, of low lying atolls, wanted the forum communique to take a strong stance on mandatory cuts to emission levels. The issue is

significant ahead of next month's Kyoto Climate Change Conference.

The communique said leaders "recognised that participants at the Kyoto conference can be expected to adopt different approaches but all forum members are unified in their support of the principles set out in this statement."

In diplomatic-speak the principles amounted to a win for Australian Prime Minister John Howard who successfully fought against any words that would impinge on Australia's industrial capacity.

On regional security, the communique said leaders recognised their "most immediate risks to security" hinge on regional and domestic developments including natural disasters, transnational crime including drug trafficking and economic, social and environmental policies.

"Forum leaders expressed concern about the vulnerability of member countries to external threats to their sovereignty," the communique said.

"The forum also acknowledged that security challenges could arise with little warning and the region needs to be able to respond quickly to them," and it noted "the potential for undesirable financial activities to undermine economic development."

"The communique proposed a series of measures to help build confidence within the region on political and security issues and agreed that dialogue should be broadened."

It also dealt with the issue of transshipments of radioactive waste from France to the Pacific. The forum called for the shipments to be carried out "in a manner which addressed all possible contingencies and the concerns of relevant countries."

The forum called on the United States to "live up to its full obligations on the provision of adequate and fair compensation" for the Marshall Islands which was used as a nuclear test site in the 1950s and 1960s.

However, no mention was made of the Marshall Islands plan to use several of its atolls as a storage site for mainly Taiwan and South Korean low level nuclear wastes, although the communique did condemn a proposal by a private U.S. investor to store nuclear waste on the U.S. islands of Wake and Palmyra.

More than a year ago Washington dismissed any suggestion those schemes would get off the ground.

The forum welcomed amendments to Fiji's constitution which make it multi-racial and more democratic, and Commonwealth members of the forum said they "agreed to fully support the readmission" of Fiji to the Commonwealth.

Next year's forum will be held in the Federated States of Micronesia.

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Free Foundation
 Established 1975
 جوردن تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الحرة الأردنية

Czechs have a role

Different regions of the world have different roles to play in the quest for peace in this part of the world. Eastern Europe was marginalised during the communist rule, but the Czech Republic, under President Havel, has taken important initiatives towards spreading values of democracy, coexistence and partnerships for peace and humanitarianism in world affairs. President Havel, an intellectual and writer as well, can be effective in bridging the widening gaps as a friend of both the Arabs and the Israelis. His current tour in the region deserves attention and support.

The agreement signed between the two friendly countries is only a baby step towards achieving a healthy and worthwhile trade relationship. The same goes for the other 14 similar agreements Jordan has signed with other countries, namely the U.S., France, U.K., Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Turkey, Indonesia, Romania, Tunisia and Malaysia.

Ramzi Khouiri

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

There are also significant grounds for opposing the EMU, especially in Germany where the debate has been heating up with the worsening of the economy and the fall of the mark compared to the dollar. After all, many in Germany claim that Chancellor Kohl's drive for a single monetary unit is due more to his inflated ego (his government witnessed the unification of Germany), than to common economic sense, particularly since the cost of unifying Germany has been extremely high from the very

Will the members of the EMU unite their exchange rates together and forever in Jan. 1, 1999? Will the voices of doom, or possibly reason, dictate that further economic integration is necessary before this union of currencies takes place? Two things may really help: a crystal ball and a stronger Deutsche Mark.

By Jane Hunter

Some of the most harrowing descriptions of Christian suffering detailed in the report are at the hands of anti-government Islamist forces in Egypt and Algeria and of Muslim religious extremists in Pakistan, although Islamabad's anti-blasphemy law is mentioned as well. Nevertheless, the activists pushing for U.S. action on Christians abroad often cite

China the target

"Forward", a New York-based Jewish weekly, suggested the justification for Jewish interest in the campaign: "At a time when certain liberal Protestant groups are moving to end Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem, the persecution issue is one on which Jews and Christians can agree. But participants say the campaign is not only about building inter-faith cooperation. It's about helping those Christians who are being enslaved and killed because of their religion; it's also about showing the world the repressive nature of the regimes that are attacking Christians or, at the least permitting such attacks — regimes that tend to be hostile to both Israel and America."

One vehicle for Jewish involvement identified by

Witnesses by ultra-Orthodox Jews and does not mention persecution of Palestinian Christians).

It is difficult to read the July 12 report without wondering if the night-wing Christians who lobbied Congress hope ultimately to enlist the U.S. foreign policy apparatus to facilitate their missionary work. The authors handle with great delicacy the issue of Christian missionaries in Muslim countries. In section after section, the report notes that even in countries where their activities are not expressly outlawed, missionaries are discouraged by such means as denial of visas and residency

Middle East International

By Waleed M. Sadi

No wonder the 98th Inter-Parliamentary conference also had on its agenda an item entitled: "Women's access to parliament: challenges and prospects." Under this item, women parliamen-

As is; the situation of women in Jordan, especially where it comes to sharing political power with men, leaves much to be desired. A more concerted effort needs to be undertaken to strike an equitable balance between men and women in our fledgling democracy. This is where political parties of different persuasions can bring their clout and pressure to bear down on the continuing effort to see more women in parliament, in a bid to make Jordan that much more democratic.

What matters more

To the Editor:

concisely present their case, the Americans will almost always feel sympathy for the Israeli precisely because of perception forged by Hollywood movies.

Years of Hollywood movies presented at theatres and on television have condi-

that portrays the Arab World in a positive light would have more impact on the American public than all the lobbying the Arab World is doing in Congress.

Ray Hanania,
RayHanania@aol.com.

Continued from page 11

...a massive
Israeli troops
Yakov
was found
in a house
Strip with his
lovely

Continued from page 11 agreement

...of State
...Albright and
...the Arab cooperation
...with Washington to
...the stalled peace
...with Israel.
...The foreign ministers
...generally adopted a series
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...affirming the pursuit of
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...By linking their decision
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...for land-for-peace and
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an effort to calm a heated Palestinian reaction to the creation of a new Jewish state in a disputed part of

ernment, opposition ch

Constitutional Front.
National Action Front.
Md. Al Haq. Al Mas.

Save water

PNA show prisoners to foreign media

(Continued from page 1)

rounded up around 1,000 suspected militants in Gaza and the West Bank.

"The objective of this secret apparatus is to carry out attacks against Jews," Mr. Ashour, 41, said in the section's small exercise yard where prisoners gather during the day.

"Last year's crackdown has hurt the movement and affected its military operations but the military wing in Hamas has the ability to develop itself and find replacements," he said.

Israel, with United States backing, has accused Mr. Arafat of operating a "revolving door" policy towards militants since the 1996 clampdown, subsequently releasing most of them from jail.

It says progress in the tattered peace process will remain on hold until the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) destroys the "terrorist infrastructure" in self-rule areas.

The demands for another mass crackdown have been rejected by Palestinians as "dictates" made by Israel's headline Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to weaken Mr. Arafat's legitimacy.

"We are not going to carry out mass arrests after every bombing," the deputy head of preventive security in Gaza, Rashid Abu Shbak, said

in an interview. "I need sufficient proof to arrest someone," he said.

He said measures were being taken against Hamas "in order to protect ourselves" from any attempt by the movement to take over the PNA and called for regional and international security cooperation against "terrorism."

"Even if we smash Hamas here, if the funding and leadership are abroad our work is in vain," Mr. Abu Shbak said.

He said Hamas political leader Musa Abu Marzouk had called for attacks against Israel from Jordan, where he has lived since his release from a New York jail last May.

Hamas supporters in Saudi Arabia were also able to fund the movement through financial transfers via London and other western European cities, Mr. Abu Shbak said.

None of the five suicide bombers who carried out the most recent suicide attacks in Jerusalem has so far been identified either by Israeli or Palestinian security forces.

Mr. Abu Shbak said several people had been detained since the bombings in Gaza on suspicion of extremist violence but none of the arrests was in connection with the Jerusalem attacks.

Access to those detainees, who remain

under questioning in preventive security cells, was not possible and prisoners at the central jail spoke in the presence of warders.

At the jail, which has more than 450 inmates, the political prisoners live in rooms decorated with gilded cardboard models of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque and posters of Islamic fundamentalist leaders.

Fewer than one third of the detainees have been charged or tried, according to prison officials.

One of the political prisoners who had been sentenced, Omar Abdallah Shallah, 32, said he had been arrested in 1995 and identified himself as a brother of the leader of the Islamic Jihad movement, Ramadan Shallah.

Mr. Shallah said he had been accused of planning the killing by Islamic Jihad suicide bombers of 21 Israelis, all but one of them soldiers, at a bus stop in central Israel in January 1995.

He said the prisoners saw little prospect of imminent release following a visit to the Middle East this month by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that focused on security.

Water crisis in Palestinian territory — whose hand on the tap?

By Elias M. Zananiri

IT ALL looks like living at the Arctic, only a little different. There, they have six months night and six months day. Here, in many of the West Bank towns, they receive water for six months and then remain without water supplies for six months. Bethlehem and Hebron areas, south of Jerusalem, are the most affected by the unjust distribution of water between Palestinians and Jewish settlers in their surroundings.

The control is in Israel's hands. The underground wells supply water without any limits to the Jewish settlements, but small quantities go to the Palestinian towns and villages in the area. Israel blames it on the water infrastructure in the Palestinian territories while choosing to ignore the fact that it controlled the area for the past three decades, since the June 1967 war, and did nothing to repair that infrastructure.

Besides, when setting up the infrastructure for the settlements' water supply, it so happens that not only are the Palestinian territories ignored, but even work is done in such a way that the vast majority of water goes directly to the system that supplies water to the Jewish settlements, giving them top priority.

According to official esti-

mates, the Bethlehem district for instance, needs some 700 cubic metres per hour. Yet, what Israel pumps through the water system for the area is no more than half of this amount. In Jewish settlements surrounding Hebron and Bethlehem, the settlers have enjoyed the luxury of having swimming pools, green lawns and gardens and even the chance to wash their cars daily outside their houses. For the overwhelming majority of Palestinians living in the area, water shortage is so serious that they have to resort to alternative sources, buying tap water from Israelis or collecting water from the nearest wells in the area.

Financially-stable Palestinian families can afford buying water from whichever source is available. They also can afford buying huge water reservoirs on their roofs and filling them with water for use when needed. For them water shortage is a matter of inconvenience. For others, it is a matter of survival. Needy families or those families with limited income rely on their children or wives to ride their donkeys or their bicycles, if they are lucky enough to afford having one, to go to the nearest well for water.

Yousef, a 10-year-old child, spends most of his

day shuttling on a donkey between his house, in Al Khader village, and the water spring in Artas village. The trip takes him some two hours.

"At the beginning I enjoyed doing it. If felt like a new way of entertainment. But now I am so bored doing the same thing every day, sometimes more than three times a day," said Yousef, dressed in old shorts and a T-shirt. Besides, he added, traffic is heavy on the main road out of Bethlehem towards Hebron. I often have to fight with my donkey to steer him back to the sidewalk. I want neither of us to be run over by one of those cars driving along the road," he said.

Mahmoud Jaafari, of Dheisheb refugee camp, is 68. He remembers how, as a child, he used to do almost the same job for his father. Today, he too goes to the well in the nearby Artas village to collect some water. "Many things have changed in the last four decades, except for the water problem. I am still living in the thirties, working hard for every drop of water I drink, while Jewish settlements in the surroundings have much more water than they need," he said.

Rizeq Yaacob is an employee of the Palestinian Water Commission in the Bethlehem district. Before

the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was proclaimed in 1994, he had worked with the Israeli civil administration's water department. His job is to monitor water distribution in his district. As such, his duty, on an almost fortnight basis, is to open up some water taps and close others. In other words, if the eastern parts of the district receive tap water for two weeks, the western side has to wait for two weeks for its turn to come.

"There is a serious shortage of water in the area," admitted Mr. Yaacob, noting that his job is to try, and partially satisfy, the residents of the area.

Despite his efforts and those of the employees in his department, Mr. Yaacob has failed. Some families said they had not received water for at least two years. One family said no water tap has run through their pipes for more than five years and that they have finally dropped the hope of being hooked up to the system. This family now relies on water it buys from different sources.

According to Mr. Yaacob, the settlers consume in one hour more water than all Palestinians in the area do in one day. Statistics that were published two years ago show that Palestinian water consumption was 35 cubic metres per person per

year, while that of the settlers was 106 mcm per annum.

Water, along with borders, status of settlements, refugees and the question of Jerusalem, are issues left for deliberations between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel in the final status talks.

Palestinian sources blame Israel for trying to determine the shape of the final status by introducing unilateral steps that affect each of those outstanding issues. As far as the water crisis is concerned, Palestinians are not allowed to dig new wells in their areas because of Israeli fears that subterranean water resources might be affected. But the real purpose, Palestinians argue, is Israel's intention to keep its hand on the tap to control the fine details of the other's daily life. Israel is imposing a general siege on the PNA areas and gives itself the right to decide how many glasses of water Palestinians are allowed, or rather not allowed, to drink," said Mahmoud Jaafari.

The writer, who worked for the WTN and MBC television, is currently correspondent for the Gulf Today and the Jerusalem Times. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Israel eases closure slightly amidst Palestinian protest over banning call to prayer in Hebron

(Continued from page 1)

discredit Palestinians, officials said.

Following a massive manhunt by Israeli troops and police, Yaakov Schwartz, 63, was found last Wednesday in a house near the Gaza Strip with his ankles and wrists loosely bound.

Mr. Schwartz, an ultra-Orthodox Jew who was viciously opposed to the peace process with the Palestinians, at first told police he had been abducted by two Palestinian mili-

itants. But he finally admitted to police Sunday that he had made up the story.

Authorities who spent some \$300,000 hunting for Mr. Schwartz in the belief he had been abducted by Palestinians, said they were collecting evidence to press charges.

Meanwhile, the mother of Yahya Ayash, the Palestinian bomb maker assassinated by presumed Israeli agents in January 1996, has been sentenced to jail by an Israeli court for complicity in her son's actions, the army said Sunday.

Aisha Ayash, 52, was sentenced to 40 days in jail plus a two-year suspended prison term but has already served enough time in preventive detention to cover the sentence, a military spokesman said.

Aisha Ayash, who lives on the West Bank, was accused of acting as a courier in 1995 between West Bank activists of the Islamic Resistance movement (Hamas) and her son in the autonomous Gaza Strip.

She allegedly brought messages to her son from

the West Bank militants and brought back a pistol from the Gaza Strip.

Yehiya Ayash, nicknamed The Engineer for his bomb-making skills, was held responsible by Israel for a series of suicide bomb attacks. He was killed in January 1996 when a cellular phone presumably booby-trapped by the Israeli secret services, blew up in his face.

Hamas retaliated with a new series of suicide bombings in February of 1996 which left dozens dead.

Arab League agrees to allow MENA summit amidst ongoing boycott calls

(Continued from page 1)

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and reaffirmed Arab cooperation with Washington to revive the stalled peace process with Israel.

The foreign ministers meanwhile adopted a series of resolutions, notably one confirming "the pursuit of the halt of normalisation steps with Israel in light of the peace process."

They linked their decision to "Israel's return to the guidelines of the Madrid conference and the principle for land-for-peace and the implementation of the

agreements it has struck with the Arabs in the peace process."

They also slammed Israel's settlement policies in Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories and called for a halt of settlement construction.

The foreign ministers also urged the international community to withhold funds for Israel which could be used to build settlements, warning that Israeli policies "have a dangerous impact on the peace process and threaten to destroy it."

The meeting also adopted a resolution voicing con-

cern over Turkish-Israeli-U.S. naval manoeuvres expected to take place in the eastern Mediterranean in November.

"These manoeuvres represent a threat to stability in the region and a negative development which does not contribute to efforts aimed at achieving just and comprehensive peace in the region," a statement said.

They urged Ankara to "reconsider its military cooperation with Israel," a reference to a military pact signed between the two countries in February 1996.

The Arab foreign ministers also urged Turkey,

Syria and Iraq to hold as soon as possible negotiations on water sharing.

They also decided to defy U.S.-led international sanctions imposed on Libya over its involvement in the 1988 bombing of a passenger plane over Lockerbie in Scotland that killed 270 people.

According to the statement, Arab countries will allow planes carrying Libyan leader Muammer Qadhafi to land on their territory and will authorise other flights for humanitarian and religious purposes.

Palestinian claims he still owns east Jerusalem house

(Continued from page 1)

the land but had been prevented from doing so by the government.

In an effort to calm vehement Palestinian reaction to the creation of a new Jewish enclave in a disputed part of

Jerusalem, the Israeli government last week agreed the families would move out. But it allowed them to be replaced by 10 religious students who were to renovate and guard the property. Palestinians rejected the

so-called compromise and accused the Israelis of trying to preempt scheduled negotiations on the future of Jerusalem and other final status issues concerning occupied Palestinian areas. East Jerusalem was occu-

pied and unilaterally annexed by Israel in 1967. The Palestinians hope to make it the capital of a future state while Israel insists it will remain part of the country's "eternal capital."

Government, opposition charge each other for failure to launch dialogue

(Continued from page 1)

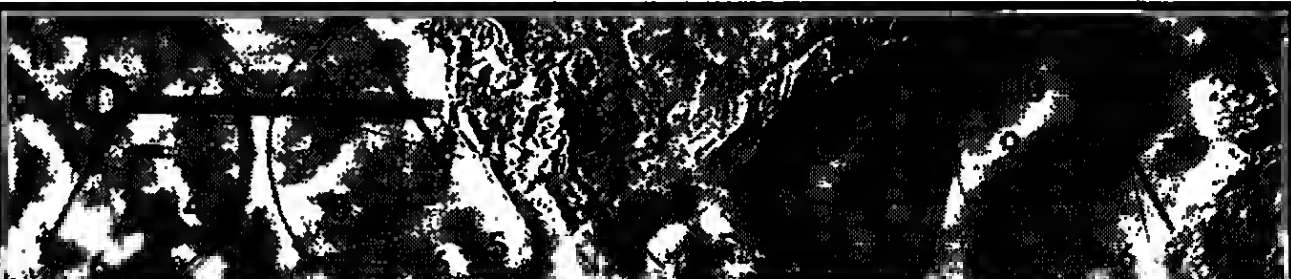
Action Front, the Jordanian Arab Constitutional Front, the National Action Front, Hashd, Al Haq, Al Mus-

taqbal, the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party, the Democratic Popular Nationalist Movement, the Union of Professional Associations,

and representatives of a group in the making under the leadership of Leith Shbeilat, president of the Jordan Engineers Association,

as well as representatives of 82 independent personalities who three weeks ago published a pro-boycott declaration.

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WTO backs open financial service markets

GENEVA (R) — World Trade Organisation (WTO) economists said Monday developing as well as industrialised countries stood to win major benefits if a pact opening up the global financial services industry were reached this year.

In a study issued after a new round of talks left prospects for a deal cloudy following the summer's currency turmoil in key South East Asian economies, they also argued that commitment to liberalisation could help avoid such problems in the future.

"Significant benefits are likely to arise from liberalisation of financial services trade," said the report, describing the multi-billion dollar sector as "the backbone of modern economies." Enhanced competition would improve the efficiency and service to the customer, whether governments or individuals, across the banking, insurance and securities industry which provides millions of jobs around the globe, the study said.

In a comment clearly referring to the recent Asian crisis which mainly hit Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, the WTO economists said freer markets in the sector would offer "better means of managing risks and absorbing shocks."

Opening up, they said, "will induce governments to improve macroeconomic management, domestic policy interventions in credit markets and financial sector regulation and supervision."

The message, also voiced by both United States and European Union (EU) officials in contacts with Asian governments in recent weeks, was summarised

bluntly in Hong Kong at the weekend by the WTO's first director-general, Peter Sutherland.

Referring to the crisis and suggestions from some regional leaders that foreign operators were to blame, the now chairman of the Goldman Sachs International merchant banking firm declared: "Liberalisation is the cure, not the cause."

Speaking before a meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank at which prospects for the financial services pact will be discussed, Mr. Sutherland said Asian governments were wrong to conclude they could not open up more.

It was, he said, "the very shortcomings to existing financial structures and regulatory regimes which have helped exacerbate recent difficulties."

"Liberalisation should produce strong financial systems, reduce risk and make currency volatility manageable," declared the Irish one-time EU competition commissioner who steered the 1986-93 world trade negotiations to a successful conclusion.

But diplomats and business leaders in Geneva for last week's negotiations on a pact under the WTO umbrella agreed there had been little headway in persuading the three key Asian states hit by the crisis to make better offers on opening markets.

U.S. officials, who have softened their public stance since they walked out of earlier talks in 1995 arguing major emerging economies were not offering enough for a financial services pact, said they understood the political problems faced by

the South East Asians.

They agreed they had hoped to be deeper into negotiations less than 90 days before the Dec. 12 deadline for a pact, but said emerging economy envoys had given them a good idea of where advances might be possible before then.

Washington argues that other countries must agree to wider — even if phased — opening of their markets before it can agree to a pact throwing open its own sector under WTO rules that bar discrimination among trading partners.

WTO Director General Renato Ruggiero, who will be pushing for more intensive discussion among finance ministers in Hong Kong this week, said the negotiations were "on a good track" especially after a new offer from Singapore. And U.S. business sources

from the financial services sector said last week's talks had been more positive than they expected among the some 60 countries taking an active part, but foresaw other obstacles ahead and not just from South East Asia.

"Brazil could still be a major problem," said one, pointing to "real barriers" for foreign banks and insurance companies in the vast Latin American country with a population of some 150 million — some nine times more than Malaysia.

India, whose largely closed insurance market is of strong interest to U.S. and EU-based firms, could also prove a stumbling block, he added.

World Bank calls on Asia to lure infrastructure investors

HONG KONG (AFP) — High risks and transaction costs to most Asian countries are hampering investments in Asian infrastructure, estimated to require two trillion dollars in the next decade, the World Bank has said.

Gautam Kagi, the bank's managing director, said Asia needed to solve this infrastructure bottleneck if it was to sustain economic growth well into the next century.

World Bank experts say private sector capital is critical to funding the building of roads, airports, power plants and telecommunications systems

needed to sustain Asia's growth, as state coffers could not cope alone.

However, many businesses have been reluctant to invest in these projects because of poor regulations, high bidding costs, expensive financing terms and weak domestic capital markets.

"Asian policy-makers and private sector executives agree: The binding constraint to increasing private investment is not the lack of financing, but rather excessive risk-to-reward ratios and high transaction costs in most countries in the region," Mr. Gautam said in a World Bank seminar.

He told the seminar that many government policies made it hard for the private sector "to arrange the right financial structure."

"The message is clear: Countries that want to encourage private investment need to create an environment that is more conducive to private investment," he said.

While private sector investment in East Asian infrastructure had increased to between 14 and 18 per cent of total investments in 1996 from 10 per cent the past few years, this was still below the required share of 30 per cent in the next five years, Mr. Gautam said.

Counting the costs of Asia's infrastructure problems, Mr. Gautam said 1.7 per cent of metropolitan Bangkok's gross domestic product was lost due to huge traffic jams.

Nine per cent of deaths in India, for example, could be attributed to diseases caused by poor water supply and sanitation, he added.

"If Asia is to maintain and increase its competitiveness, improve the quality of life of its people, and continue its progress toward a greater role in the global economy, it must address the demand for infrastructure," the World Bank official stressed.

World Bank says China can maintain spectacular growth path

HONG KONG (AFP) — China faces formidable challenges in maintaining its spectacular growth, after expanding fourfold in the past 15 years, but it has the capacity to meet them, the World Bank has said.

The country was developing from a rural to an industrialised economy in one or two generations, a process that took centuries in Europe, while it also was treading the "treacherous" path from a command- to market-led economy.

The World Bank report, China 2020: Development Challenges in the New Century, said China faced risks immediately ahead including:

— Banks and state enterprises: Banks have weakened, as have the state enterprises which borrow from them. Although state support precludes any bank collapse, "the cost of bailing out the banks is high and rising."

— Reform of state firms and jobs: "Rising unemployment in some cities could discourage the government from pursuing state enterprise reform." This would lead to a domino effect through the economy leaving China looking "less like its East Asian partners and more like Latin America."

— The environment: Delayed enterprise reforms could slow growth and hamper

efforts to clean the environment. "Pollution of both air and water could rise sharply."

— The government's fiscal position: "Without reform, a broad range of needed public expenditures in health, education, infrastructure and the environment would be jeopardised."

But the World Bank said China could overcome these challenges.

"While the difficulties ahead should not be underestimated, neither should China's strengths — relative stability, a remarkably high savings rate, a strong track record of pragmatic reforms, a supportive Chinese diaspora and a growing administrative capacity," it explained.

To improve its chances of success, China would require skilled economic management, a supportive world economy and domestic social stability, the World Bank said.

The report outlined two scenarios for how China would look in 2020, depending on whether the pace of reform was maintained, or was allowed to slow or halt.

A lack of reform would lead to slower growth and "Sinosclerosis," it said. "It would remain a low-income economy with a diminishing presence in world markets."

The World Bank said the other vision of China in 2020, after sustained reform, was of a country that was "competitive, caring and confident" in its record of having eliminated poverty.

"By 2020 this China would be the second largest trading nation in the world and a major force in grain and energy markets," the report emphasised.

The report said that forecasting growth in China was complex and subject to wide variations by 2020, but cited one projection in which savings rates fell from 40 per cent to 35 per cent and productivity growth eased slightly.

"In this scenario, GDP (gross domestic product) growth would be 8.4 per cent a year between 1996 and 2000... and would average 6.6 per cent over the 25 years until 2020," it said.

"By 2020 per capita incomes in China would be approaching those of Portugal today but would still be less than half of those in the United States," the World Bank pointed out.

The projection would see China's GDP growth easing from nine to two per cent currently to 5.5 per cent in 2020 as the economy matured, the labour force stopped growing and return from capital diminished.

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THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Boost
- Fiber plant
- Ministering
- avis
- Singing voice
- Sandusky's take
- Pearl Buck heroine
- Frighten
- Kind of bean
- Multilingual
- Amesbury
- Samuel's land
- Suit to
- Paragon
- Ergo
- Dodges
- Golf club
- Legal matter
- Eternal city
- Wading bird
- Charges
- Workers' gp.
- it up (give fun)
- Lubricant
- Vietnam dialect
- Mosquito genus
- Moslem ruler
- Fat
- Betel nut
- Newly discovered comet
- Israeli airline
- Explosive
- On the brim
- out (distribute)
- Perception
- Applaud
- Vaccinator
- Old World falcon
- City of India

DOWN

- Stage piece
- French composer
- Orkney's river
- Jupiter satellite
- In any way
- Wisconsin
- Med. sub.
- N.T. book abbr.
- Astronaut Neil
- Credo
- Uninteresting
- Frost
- Cherished
- Strong wind
- Hammer part
- Flying prefix
- Deserve
- Convex molding
- Pythia's pal
- Adie to the staff
- Mountain nymph
- Dile of song
- Curves
- Quality of lustre
- At any time
- Evaluate response
- rocky
- Scarcely
- Astronomer Johannes
- Slip by
- Change
- Fabric borders
- Nautical term
- Party noah
- Large portion
- Norway's capital
- moss
- Famly member
- Govt. org.

Peanuts

IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH US OLAF? HAVE WE WASTED OUR LIVES?

IT'LL BE DIFFERENT WHEN WE FIND SPIKE, AND HE INTRODUCES US TO MICKEY MOUSE.

MAYBE HE CAN GET US ON SOME TALK SHOWS.

WE CAN'T TALK.

MAYBE WE COULD PRETEND WE'RE LITTLE KIDS IN DOG SUITS.

Andy Capp

DON'T LOOK SO DEPRESSED, PET. TELL YOU WHAT...

JUST IMAGINE HOW HAPPY YOU'D FEEL IF YOU LOST EVERYTHING YOU HAVE RIGHT NOW, AND THEN GOT IT ALL BACK AGAIN.

...INCLUDING YOU?

Mutt'n' Jeff

WHO WAS THE BLONDE YOU WAS OUT WITH TUESDAY?

SHE WAS THE BRUNETTE I WAS OUT WITH MONDAY.

SHE HAS A TWIN THAT'S BLONDE TOO.

OH REALLY? HOW CAN YOU TELL THEM APART?

HER BROTHER WALKS DIFFERENT.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES:

(March 21 to April 19) The sun is now in Libra, sign of the pacifist. Aries is the sign of the warrior. Libra's always saying, "Wait, we can work this out." You might get impatient with that kind of person, but it's actually good for you to learn to negotiate. It makes you more effective.

TAURUS:

(April 20 to May 20) As the sun goes into Libra, the work pace intensifies. There's a lot more paperwork. Communicating information is the skill you're practising. It looks like there is a great deal of money coming into your life, too. This might not be so bad after all.

GEMINI:

(May 21 to June 21) Today is about completion. Don't start anything new; you can do that later. It's best right now that you finish up activities you've already begun. The sun is going into Libra. For you, that's marvellous. It means the next 30 days are going to be fun.

MOON CHILDREN:

(June 22 to July 21) While the sun is in Virgo, you were learning, but he or she won't tell you exactly what it is. This makes you crazy. You're very precise. The other person is definitely sloppy about details. Instead of going nuts, help this ditz get organised. You'll be greatly appreciated.

LEO:

(July 22 to August 21) It's always easier when the sun is in Libra. It provides good conditions for learning. It helps you absorb information quickly. It's also much easier to get the information. People want to tell you whatever you want to know. That will be especially true today.

VIRGO:

(August 22 to September 22) Somebody wants you to do something, but he or she won't tell you exactly what it is. This makes you crazy. You're very precise. The other person is definitely sloppy about details. Instead of going nuts, help this ditz get organised. You'll be greatly appreciated.

LIBRA:

(September 23 to October 22) The sun is going into your sign today. This is a marvellous occasion. Celebrate the autumnal equinox, but don't start any new projects yet. Finish up old ones instead. You know that person you told you'd "do lunch" with? Well, do lunch!

SCORPIO:

(October 23 to November 21) You've got about 30 days to prepare for your big project. Think about what you want to accomplish, how you're going to do it and what it's going to look like when it's done. Visualise a finished product. That's an important part of this whole process.

SAGITTARIUS:

(November 22 to December 21) You'll notice there will be more time for committee meetings, parties and being with friends in the next few weeks. In the morning, you still have to focus on your work. You can't put it off any longer. Get it handled and you'll be out from under the pressure.

CAPRICORN:

(December 22 to January 20) Be patient and considerate of other people's point of view today. You get very involved in what you want. You'll push to make it happen. Sometimes that's very effective, and sometimes it produces the opposite result. During the coming phase, you'll learn to be a negotiator.

AQUARIUS:

(January 21 to February 19) The day starts out slowly, but by the evening it'll be fabulous. People are in a festive mood. A childlike sensibility will prevail. You're very good at thinking up ways to be outrageous. Do something absolutely unheard of on a Monday evening.

PISCES:

(February 20 to March 20) During the sun's transit of Virgo, you learned to get along with a person you didn't agree with all the time. That was good. During Libra, take what you recently learned and put it to work. These skills could make you very wealthy.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VELOH

ADGRU

BOMERY

SECCAS

Answer: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: FATAL LADLE OEFIE BUZZER

Answer: A plan to increase gasoline taxes did this "FUELED" OEBATE

Financial institutions expected to merge soon

Financial institutions are expected to merge soon, according to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The report, titled "Financial Services Trade: A Guide to the WTO Negotiations," states that the financial services industry is undergoing a period of rapid change and consolidation. It predicts that the number of financial institutions will decline significantly over the next few years as larger entities absorb smaller ones. This trend is driven by the need for economies of scale and the desire to offer a wider range of services to customers. The report also notes that the WTO negotiations on financial services trade are progressing, but that significant challenges remain, particularly in the areas of market access and regulatory harmonization.

Banks lower interest on deposits

Banks are lowering interest rates on deposits, according to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The report, titled "Financial Services Trade: A Guide to the WTO Negotiations," states that banks are lowering interest rates on deposits in order to attract new business and to remain competitive in a market that is becoming increasingly global. This move is part of a broader strategy to reduce costs and improve efficiency. The report also notes that the WTO negotiations on financial services trade are progressing, but that significant challenges remain, particularly in the areas of market access and regulatory harmonization.

THE BUSINESS

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7740	0.6267
US Mark	0.5437	1.0000	0.3536
US Franc	1.6110	2.8007	1.0363
US Yen	0.0082	121.11	0.0073
US Dollar	0.7202	1.2772	0.4488
US Lira	0.0006	1.0232	0.3678
US Gold	0.5007	34.77	0.3164
US Franc	0.1679	0.2976	0.1041

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	18.05	18.42
WTI	18.34	18.58
Gas	18.65	18.42
Coal	17.85	17.64
Oil Gas	204.00	210.00

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	320.6	321
Silver (oz)	4.71	4.73
Platinum (oz)	430.2	432.2
Al (10 Months)	0	0
Cu (10 Months)	0	0
Zinc (10 Months)	0	0
Lead (10 Months)	0	0
Ni (10 Months)	0	0

Commodities

Commodity	Price
SA Rice	1.00
AE Rice	1.00
KW Rice	1.00
SH Rice	1.00
CY Rice	1.00

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Business

A review of news from the Arabic press

Financial institutions expected to merge soon

**** A MERGER** between the Philadelphia Investment Bank and the Jordan Financial Investments Company (JFIC) is expected soon as initial approval has been reached by the board of directors of the two institutions. According to JFIC Chairman Walid Najjar, the approval of the general assemblies is now required.

The bank has called for an extraordinary meeting of the general assembly on Oct. 3/1997 to approve a board recommendation to increase the bank's capital through the merger. The JFIC, which was set up in 1994 and has a JD10 million capital, will be calling its shareholders for an extraordinary meeting to obtain the authorization for the merger.

The merger is expected to create a banking entity with large capital to play a greater role in expanding and boosting the Jordanian economic growth (Al Aswaq).

Railway firm considered for privatisation

**** THE GOVERNMENT** is considering privatising the Aqaba Railway Corp. to get out from under the firm's \$60 million debt, a transport ministry official has said. "Privatising the corporation will also lead to increased revenues and better performance," said Yehya Jdetawi, a director at the ministry.

The corporation was established in 1975. Its main task is to oversee the shipping of phosphate by trains from the southern towns of Hassa, Abyad and Shediya to the port of Aqaba for export.

Phosphate from Shediya currently is trucked to a rail station outside the town. Now the government plans a new rail spur directly to the phosphate plants in Shediya, Mr. Jdetawi said. Construction of the 22-kilometre spur will be started in April 1998.

American Express and Jordan National Bank sign a 'point-of-sale' agreement

**** AMERICAN EXPRESS** has signed an agreement with Jordan National Bank which will enable American Express cardmembers to benefit from the electronic Point-of-Sale terminals that are being installed at various outlets in Jordan including shops, hotels, and car rental companies. The launch of this new service to cardmembers is a further recognition of the importance of the Jordanian market to American Express. It will ensure speedy and efficient handling of card transactions for American Express cardmembers as well as for hotels and other retail outlets welcoming the American Express cards.

The Point-of-Sale terminals are located at the merchant's payment counter and linked through a telephone line to Jordan National Bank's mainframe computer system. This concept and network will ensure speed, simplicity and security to both cardmembers and merchants welcoming the American Express cards.

Banks lower interest on deposits

**** DUE TO** rising liquidity which have reached JD49.6 million by mid-September, banks have lowered interest on deposits by between one and one-and-a-half per cent. Noting that the balance of mandatory reserves has risen by around JD7.2 million to JD510.3 million, bankers have attributed this growth to a deposit rush but they described the situation as "still normal."

The bankers said the higher liquidity resulting from an increased deposit activity has weighed on the banks to reduce interest which reached as high as 10.5 per cent on large amounts. The bankers indicated that the Central Bank moves quickly to absorb excess liquidity by issuing certificates of deposit but, still, liquidity continues to rise, though not steadily (Al Ra'i).

Saudi banks seen performing better in '97

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia's commercial banks recorded higher earnings in the first half of 1997 and the strong performance will likely continue through the year, bankers have said.

Nine of the Gulf state's 12 banks which have published first half results reported an increase in net profits as they benefited from more investment in bonds and stronger demand for loans because of an economic upswing.

"All the banks that have released their balance sheets for the first half of this year recorded higher profits," a Riyadh-based banker said.

The good performance will continue through the year as most of them have boosted investment in securities and offered more

loans. "You can say the general climate is helpful given the high oil prices, relatively high government spending and an upsurge in private sector activity," he said.

The balance sheets of the nine banks showed their profits surged by around 16 per cent to 2.68 billion riyals (\$714 million) in the first half of 1997 from 2.30 billion riyals (\$613 million) in the same period of 1996.

Loans grew by nearly seven per cent to 128.9 billion riyals (\$34.3 billion) from 120.2 billion riyals (\$32 billion).

Income from investment securities jumped to around 2.84 billion riyals (\$757 million) from nearly 2.19 billion riyals (\$584 million) in the same period.

Total assets also increased by some 9.6 per cent (to 295 billion riyals (\$78.6 billion)) from 269.2 billion riyals (\$71.7 billion), maintaining Saudi Arabia's position as the biggest banking centre in the Arab World.

"Saudi banks and companies are extending the good performance they have recorded over the past few years as a result of a business upturn, diversification of services and an expansion in the private sector's activity in industries and other projects," a Saudi banker said.

The strong performance of Saudi banks and companies was reflected in a surge in the stock market in the world's biggest oil producer and exporter.

The market, where nearly

80 banks and firms trade their share, soared to a record high last week while their market capitalisation peaked at around 181.6 billion riyals (\$48.4 billion) at the end of the first half of 1997.

Saudi stockbrokers attributed such an expansion to a better corporate performance caused by real economic growth and an improvement in Saudi Arabia's financial position as a result of strong oil prices.

Despite a steady expansion in the private sector over the past few years, government spending in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states remained the wheel of economic activity as the state still dominates key sectors, including oil.

Buoyed by high oil prices,

Saudi Arabia spent nearly \$12 billion above its projected level in 1996 and again forecast expenditure at as high as \$48.2 billion in 1997.

Such spending coupled with high oil prices boosted the economy by 8.7 per cent in 1996 and high growth is predicted for this year.

The banking sector will be among the sectors that will record good growth rates this year. Apart from the profits, you will see an overall growth in banking services, deposits, total assets and other components," a banker said.

The banks which have not issued first half results are United Saudi Commercial Bank, Saudi-Cairo Bank and Riyadh Bank.

Microsoft to help Egypt fight software piracy

CAIRO (AFP) — U.S. software giant Microsoft has announced plans to locally produce its wares in return for a pledge by the Egyptian government to combat widespread software piracy and enforce copyright laws.

Trade Minister Ahmad Gowell told a press conference that the government was launching a nationwide campaign to enforce copyright laws and prevent piracy.

"The police will start today to enforce the law," Mr. Gowell said, adding that the government will also launch a public awareness campaign to warn software pirates that they can be arrested, fined and prosecuted.

Microsoft acting general manager for Egypt, Ehab Mustafa, said in return the U.S. company would offer a string of incentives to help the government including "local production of Microsoft products at specially reduced prices."

"We will also set up training centres in Egypt authorised to buy only one copy of Microsoft software and implement it on 20 personal computers, which means a 95 per cent discount of the total cost," Mr. Mustafa told AFP.

Microsoft will work band in hand with the government "to consolidate all the software they need at reduced prices" as well as help software companies in Egypt produce applications which

can be used locally and across the Middle East as well as other parts of the world, Mr. Mustafa said.

Mr. Mustafa stressed that this cooperation between Microsoft and the Egyptian government was bound to encourage more foreign investors to channel funds into Egypt, which launched a privatisation programme in 1991.

"It will also encourage local production and encourage other software companies to follow suit as well as increase national income for Egypt," Mr. Mustafa said.

The announcement follows a government decision last month to reduce customs tariffs on some imported goods as part of

its economic liberalisation programme. Under the decision, tariffs on computer and software products were slashed from 30 per cent to five per cent.

Representatives from the Business Software Alliance (BSA) had complained that software piracy in Egypt was one of the highest in the world, during a conference in Cairo in October.

"According to official statistics, software piracy represents 80 to 85 per cent of the total Egyptian market while an independent study puts it at over 90 per cent," the vice-president of BSA's European operations, Martin Smith, said.

Saudi power firm signs \$500m bank loan

KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia (R) — A Saudi Arabian electricity firm has signed a \$500 million syndicated loan with local and international banks to partly finance a major \$1.1 billion power project in the kingdom's Eastern Province.

Bankers at the signing ceremony said the 10-year loan that the Saudi Consolidated Electric Company - East (SCECO-East) signed with 25 banks would be at 90 basis points over LIBOR.

"This \$500 million term loan facility represents the first international borrowing by a Saudi public utility company and we are confident it will not be the last," said Gulf International Bank (GIB) General Manager Abdullah Al Quwais.

The Saudi government has large majority stakes in the country's four major electricity companies. The sector is heavily subsidised and in recent years has run into financial difficulties after the government put a squeeze on spending amid heavy Gulf war debt and low oil prices until early 1996.

Bankers have said the loan would not carry any government guarantee. Saudi Arabia — which in 1995 repaid its one and only sovereign loan, which was worth \$4.5 billion — has considered direct borrowing on the international market as being likely to expose the state to unwellcome publicity.

The kingdom's electricity utilities have embarked on expansion projects as part of an ambitious programme to raise the kingdom's power capacity to 60,000 megawatts over 25 years from the current 19,000 megawatts.

The SCECO-East loan will be used to partly finance the building of the Ghazlan II power plant and associated projects. SCECO-East will finance the rest from its internal resources, SCECO officials said.

"The massive project would meet increasing demand of the oil and basic industries sectors' need and the growth in economic, trade and population in the eastern province," one said.

REUTERS											
The Business of Information											
Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 21/09/97 19:10											
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF		
US Dollar		1.7740	0.6207	1.4638	122.23	1.3885	1732.84	1.9974	5.9574		
DE Mark	0.5837		0.3496	0.8252	68.88	0.7625	678.52	1.1260	3.3583		
GB Sterling	1.6110	2.8807		2.3498	196.55	2.2369	2791.61	3.2178	9.5974		
CH Franc	0.6832	121.11	0.4235		83.47	0.9479	1182.99	136.79	4.0670		
JP Yen	0.0082	1.4508	0.5073	1.1971		1.1355	14.17	163.35	4.8719		
CA Dollar	0.7202	1.2772	0.4486	1.0538	1.14		1247.54	1.4380	4.2890		
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0232	0.3578	0.8844	1419.85	0.8008		11.52	3.4360		
NL Guilder	0.5007	88.77	0.3104	73.28	61.14	0.8948	867.11		2.9811		
FR Franc	0.1679	0.2976	0.1041	24.5588	20.49	0.2330	33.51	33.5100			
Middle Eastern Currencies											
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP		
US Dollar		0.7087	3.7505	0.3770	0.3044	3.6728	1.3370	3.3875			
Jordan Dinar	1.4110		5.2921	0.5319	1.3362	0.4298	5.1824	2168.76	4.7789		
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890		0.1005	0.97	0.0812	0.98	409.61	0.9032		
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8808	9.9491		9.66	0.8078	8.74	4077.25	8.9861		
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1947	1.0304			0.0836	1.01	422.25	0.9308		
Kuwait Dinar	3.2848	2.3280	12.3187	1.2383	11.98		12.08	5048.78	0.9308		
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.1026	0.9911	0.0829		416.48	0.9223		
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4611	2.4401	0.2453	2.3882	0.1981	2.3896		2.2040		
Egyptian	0.2952	0.2092	1.1072	0.1112	1.0745	0.0899	1.0842	453.73			
Energy											
Oils	Last	Previous									
Brent	18.65	18.42									
W. Texas	18.34	18.38									
Bonny	18.65	18.42									
Dubai	17.80	17.64									
UL Gas	204.00	208.00									
Mid-East Currencies											
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY						
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4731	0.1655	0.3908	32.604						
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4831	0.169	0.3988	33.293						
KW Dinar	3.2848	5.8275	2.0382	4.8123	401.61						
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.7081	1.6468	3.885	324.36						
CY Pound	1.9035	3.3768	1.1808	2.7863	232.66						
Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)											
Period	1-M	3-M	6-M	9-M	1-Y						
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year						
USD	5.50	5.59	5.68	5.75	5.84						
GBP	7.06	7.06	7.19	7.19	7.50						
JPY	0.49	0.56	0.45	0.45	0.48						
DEM	3.16	3.16	3.32	3.32	3.62						
FRF	3.24	3.33	3.42	3.58	3.68						
CHF	1.27	1.31	1.44	1.62	1.75						
ITL	6.52	6.33	6.13	5.87	5.75						
Metal Prices											
Metal	Bid	Offer									
Gold (oz's)	320.8	321									
Silver (oz's)	4.71	4.73									
Platinum (oz's)	430.2	432.2									
CU (3 Months)	0	0									
AL (3 Months)	0	0									
Zinc (3 Months)	0	0									
Lead (3 Months)	0	0									
Ni (3 Months)	0	0									

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
BANKING SECTOR											
TELEPHONE: (011) 507179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 21/09/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
HIGH	LOW										
344.000	241.000	ARAB BANK	19.2	1.20	12	1040	345200	330.00	332.00	2.00	0.01
N 2.340	1.660	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	6.2	0.00	23	8600	16794	1.96	1.98	0.02	0.01
3.600	2.760	BANK OF JORDAN	6.2	0.00	1	150	450	3.00	3.00	0.00	0.01
1.210	0.890	NIO. EAST INV. BK.	60.4	0.00	12	6800	6249	9.91	9.92	0.01	0.01
2.480	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.1	6.85	22	17050	39358	2.27	2.31	0.04	0.01
5.200	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.9	3.90	17	610500	3052350	5.00	4.97	-0.03	0.01
4.180	2.440	JOR. KUNAFI BANK	11.1	0.00	3	271	851	3.10	3.14	0.04	0.01
1.050	0.750	JOR. GULF BANK	4.5	9.33	7	18000	13470	1.75	1.75	0.00	0.01
4.050	3.520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.4	3.17	42	19589	74209	3.80	3.78	-0.02	0.01
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 237.93 %CHG: +0.51 139 681898 3549010											
2.200	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.0	0.52	2	850	1491	1.75	1.76	0.01	0.01
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 115.10 %CHG: +0.05 2 850 1491											
1.880	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.8	5.46	34	15420	28313	1.84	1.83	-0.01	0.01
2.960	1.320	TRABIA ELECTRICITY	18.5	3.70	1	200	622	2.96	3.11	0.15	0.01
I 3.050	2.450	HILWA MINERALS	15.7	5.03	5	79615	246007	3.05	3.10	0.05	0.01
7.500	6.000	WILDS. OWNERS TRD.	7.7	4.99	2	179	1255	7.50	7.01	-0.49	0.01
3.050	2.300	SHIPPING LINES	15.7	4.44	2	150	675	2.75	2.75	0.00	0.01
1.550	0.920	MATL. PORTUGAL	9	0.00	21	15100	19904	1.31	1.32	0.01	0.01
1.010	0.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.8	6.52	2	300	273	92	92	0.00	0.01
810	450	JORDAN ENCL. TRAD.	10	0.00	2	1100	570	54	53	-0.01	0.01
1.780	1.350	NIO. EAST HOTELS	14.9	4.92	7	1	400	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.01
1.190	0.930	JORDAN EDUCATION	9	0.00	2	1850	1850	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.01
2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	8.3	6.29	2	500	875	1.74	1.75	0.01	0.01
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 109.44 %CHG: -0.24 73 114914 301534											
4.450	3.220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	25.8	2.87	21	11458	44048	3.85	3.83	-0.02	0.01
4.140	3.000	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.3	2.70	3	331	1223	3.75	3.70	-0.05	0.01
7.050	5.400	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.1	3.29	1	400	2428	6.05	6.07	0.02	0.01
11.000	9.070	JOR. PETROLEUM INDUSTRY	10.5	8.87	10	867	1089	10.80	10.81	0.01	0.01
7.150	5.800	JOR. WORSTED MILLS	11.0	2.92	5	5670	38833	6.80	6.85	0.05	0.01
4.700	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	12.6	4.38	31	10942	50139	4.60	4.67	0.07	0.01
2.650	2.150	JORDAN DRUGS	8.9	9.00	2	9100	8215	2.15	2.65	0.50	0.01
5.950	4.300	ADR ALDAMA DV. INV.	14.3	4.30	10	5092	29477	5.73	5.82	0.09	0.01
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUMIN. IND.	5.8	10.04	1	250	623	2.49	2.49	0.00	0.01
1.960	1.450	JORDAN CEMENT POLYTR.	10.0	0.00	89	10000	50000	49	49	0.00	0.01
1.270	1.000	ARAB PAPER CONVD.	30.9	0.00	4	750	758	1.00	1.01	0.01	0.01
1.770	0.510	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	8	12250	6290	53	53	0.00	0.01
940	520	JOR. ROADSIDE INDUS.	10.0	0.00	2	570	902	63	66	0.03	0.01
1.670	1.120	ARAB PHARM. CERN.	17.1	5.22	22	8468	11343	1.34	1.34	0.00	0.01
1.880	1.080	INTV. MODN. INDUS.	9	0.00	1	1950	2438	1.25	1.25	0.00	0.01
1.470	0.900	JORDAN RESOURCES	12.2	10.99	5	1615	815	91	91	0.00	0.01
1.520	1.300	MATL. CHINAIDE	14.9	4.23	5	2444	3859	1.59	1.58	-0.01	0.01
1.070	0.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.2	0.00	11	8341	6921	83	83	0.00	0.01
1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.2	0.00	10	6840	6840	1.14	1.14	0.00	0.01
1.200	0.860	UNION CH. 5 YRS.	51.4	0.00	6	3500	3985	1.16	1.13	-0.03	0.01
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 121.20 %CHG: -0.14 249 184125 278973											
GRAND TOTAL											
INDEX: 173.79 %CHG: +0.23 463 981878 4131007											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 21/09/1997											
0.630	0.300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	3000	300	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.01
0.650	0.300	JOR. TRADING PAC	10.9	0.00	21	37000	15170	42	41	-0.01	0.01
0.780	0.660	UNION IND. SOJ	8	0.00	8	20500	4920	75	74	-0.01	0.01
0.570	0.360	ARAB PIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	76	1193350	476730	39	40	0.01	0.01
N 0.950	0.500	AL-SHAR. INV. CO.	9	0.00	1	800	800	0.85	0.85	0.00	0.01
0.550	0.380	ARAB INVEST. TRD.	47.2	0.00	5	2800	1148	41	41	0.00	0.01
N 0.750	0.400	MATL. MULT. GEN. MANICO	9	0.00	11	27750	12593	44	43	-0.01	0.01
N 0.960	0.500	JORDAN STEEL	11.5	5	19000	5	17848	33	35	0.02	0.01
0.810	0.710	JORDAN HAZEL	33.9	6.67	3	822	321	76	75	-0.01	0.01
1.190	0.860	UNION TOBACCO 75?	9	0.00	2	900	458	1.17	1.16	-0.01	0.01
0.550	0.300	TRD. PHARM. 85?	8	0.00	8	8176	42512	53	56	0.03	0.01
0.750	0.290	INDS. GEN.	9	0.00	1	250	75	30	30	0.00	0.01
N 1.000	0.690	ALUM. ALUMINUM. 75?	98.8	0.00	9	16000	7358	70	70	0.00	0.01
N 0.720	0.410	ALUM. ALUMINUM. 75?	38.6	1	360	8	360	0.8	0.8	0.00	0.01
0.660	0.580	NIO. EAST COMPLEX	7.6	16.13	5	4900	3038	62	62	0.00	0.01
GRAND TOTAL											
176 1406853 583167											

Women's Basketball Championship

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CH FLO

Iran flexes muscles with over 200,000 troops in war games

'Iran has no territorial ambitions, but will defend itself'

TEHRAN (R) — More than 200,000 Iranian troops will soon take part in the final phase of war games in the Gulf, a ground forces commander said Sunday.

One of the goals of the annual exercise is to show the world that while Iran has no territorial ambitions on other countries its forces are fully ready to defend the Islamic Republic, the official news agency, IRNA said.

"We also want to demonstrate in practice that the forces of the regional countries themselves can safeguard security in the Persian Gulf in the absence of foreign powers," it quoted Brigadier General Abdulali Pour-Shab, acting commander of ground

forces, as saying.

Iran has recently made overtures to its Arab neighbours across the Gulf and said they had no need of U.S. and other Western forces present in the region for their security.

The general said that in the final phase of the week-long exercise, more than 200,000 ground, air and naval forces would push back forces of a hypothetical enemy from Iranian territory.

A major part of operations would be carried out by ground forces and for the first time more than 200,000 servicemen of various armoured, infantry, artillery, airborne, engineering and logistics divisions would be involved.

The exercises were aimed at using the experiences of Iran's war with neighbouring Iraq from 1980-88 and passing them on to younger forces, the acting commander said.

Iran holds military exercises every September during a "holy week" to mark the beginning of its war with Iraq.

Another commander, Brigadier General Karim Ehadat, said all strategies of an actual war were deployed in the exercise.

For the first time, they would include anti-air defence operations, IRNA quoted him as saying. Live bullets and missiles would be used.

Tehran newspapers reported earlier that air-

borne troops parachuted an armoured reconnaissance vehicle from a C-130 transport plane at an altitude of 6,500 metres during the war games.

They quoted Iranian military experts as saying the drop was unprecedented in the Middle East.

A Revolutionary Guards airborne brigade commander said his brigade parachuted vehicles weighing up to 17,000 pounds during the war with Iraq but the drop of the 21,500 pound Scorpion set a new record.

The Scorpion, made by British defence specialist Alvis PLC Alvis L, was driven by troops immediately after Saturday's drop, the papers said.

53 people killed south of Algiers

ALGIERS (AFP) — Fifty-three residents of a village south of Algiers were massacred by an armed group, the Le Soir d'Algerie evening newspaper said Sunday.

The victims, mainly women and children, lived in the Guelb El Kehir village in the Medea region near the main road linking Bouira to Berrouaghia. The attackers slit their throats, the paper said.

The bodies were taken to a nearby hospital.

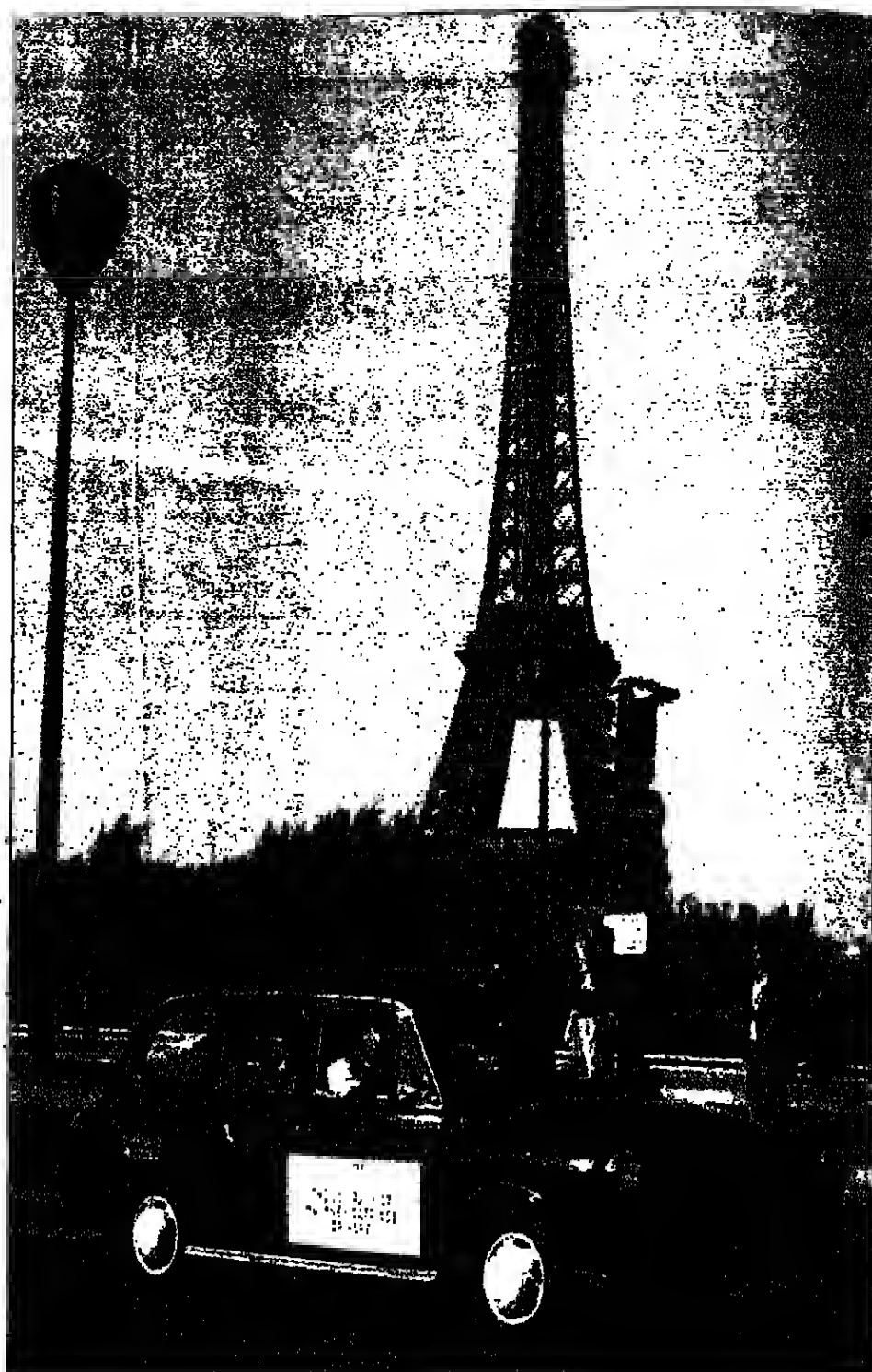
There was no immediate attribution of responsibility for the killings which took place early Saturday and the Le Soir d'Algerie did not say how many people took part in the attack.

It is the first large-scale attack since 63 people were savagely slaughtered at the beginning of September with axes, swords and bullets in a suburb of Beni Messous, in a very poor neighbourhood known as Sidi Youssef.

Algeria has been hit by a wave of bloody massacres since an Islamist insurrection erupted against the military-backed government in 1992 after it cancelled the second round of elections.

International Human Rights monitors blame both Islamist groups and the security forces for the attacks.

Western sources estimate that around 60,000 people have died in five years of violence.



London taxis drive kids to Diana's crash tunnel

PARIS (AFP) — A fleet of London taxis Sunday drove in convoy bringing handicapped and ill children to pay their last respects to Diana, Princess of Wales, at the tunnel where she died in Paris.

Some 85 cabbies, the drivers of the famous black taxis, transported about 100 children through the French capital so they

could lay flowers at the entrance to the Pont de l'Alma, where Diana died in a car crash on Aug. 31.

The cabbies blasted their car horns as they crossed the River Seine to the spot, escorted by two ambulances and British and French police.

Diana was a patron of London's Great Ormond Street Hospital where all

the patients are children, and regularly visited the hospital to meet youngsters. The trip was planned by a charity which has for the past four years sent sick children to Eurodisney near Paris.

The taxi drivers' group "The Fellowship of Hackney Carriage Drivers" and police organised the trip.

Saudi Arabia to barter \$1.5b in South African weapons with oil

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South Africa is set to land the biggest arms deal in its history when Saudi Arabia's defence minister arrives Wednesday to discuss an arms for oil exchange.

The \$1.5 billion contract involves anti-aircraft missiles and G-6 self-propelled artillery systems — regarded as the "Rolls Royce" of its type — according to the Sunday Independent newspaper.

It would boost a South African arms industry hit by cuts in the domestic military budget and also allow the country to buy Saudi oil, reducing its current dependence on Iran for oil, well-informed sources told AFP. Since 1994 South Africa has reduced the amount of

Iranian oil it imports from 90 per cent of the total to 65 per cent.

Saudi Minister of Defence and Aviation Prince Sultan Ben Abdulaziz Al Saud is to visit from September 24 to 29, at the invitation of President Nelson Mandela, whom he is scheduled to meet.

Until now the United States has opposed arms deals between South Africa and Saudi Arabia — which it regards as its preserve for selling military hardware — but no objections have been made to this deal, according to AFP's sources.

Washington has always criticised the close ties South Africa has with Iran, against which it has decreed an embargo on the grounds of alleged involvement in

international terrorism.

However, Saudi Africa's charge d'affaires in Pretoria, Soud Zedan, alleged that some countries, which he refused to name, had attempted to prevent the arms deal.

"With no hesitation we will do business with whoever we want," he told the Sunday Independent. "No one would dare tell us what to do. We understand our position and our responsibilities. We will never compromise on our faith and our security."

"Our security is non-negotiable," Mr. Zedan continued. "We have 12 neighbouring countries and we have the right to protect our people."

Prince Sultan, who is also the country's second deputy

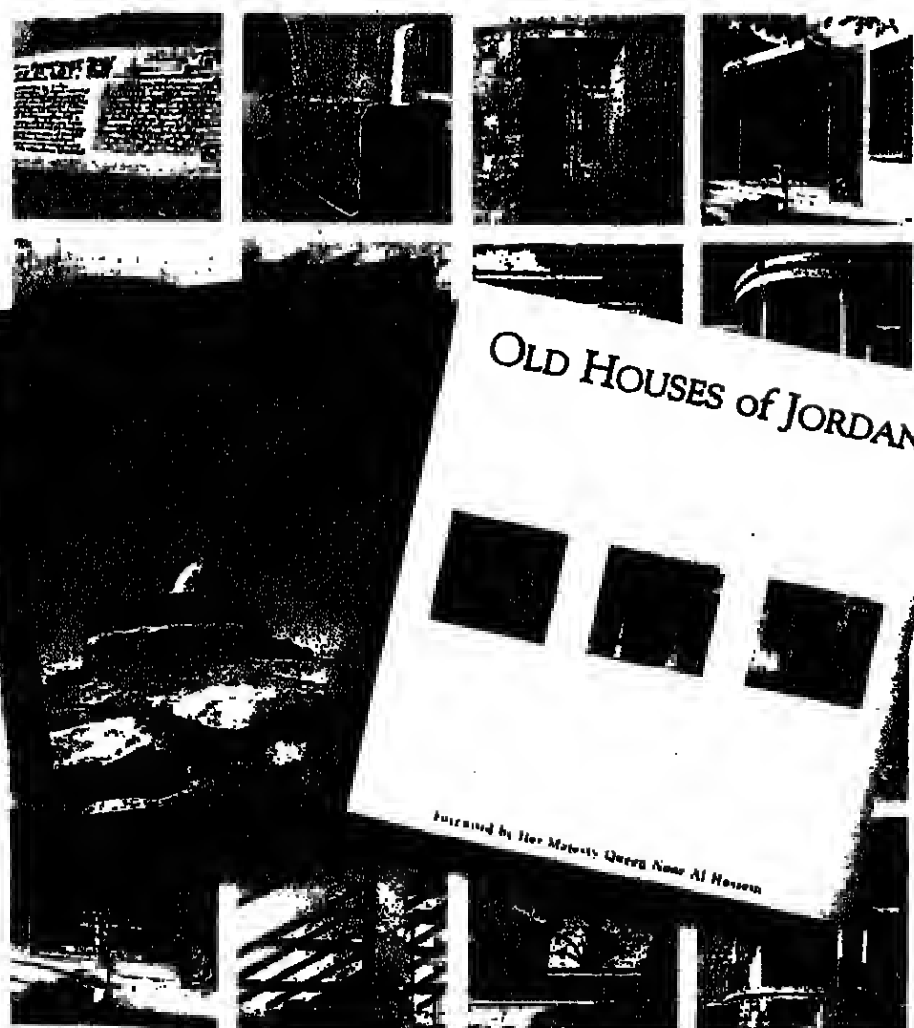
prime minister, told the Sunday Independent the six-day visit would include other negotiations outside of the arms deal.

South Africa and Saudi Arabia established diplomatic relations in 1994 and the Middle Eastern country has become an increasingly important trading partner for South Africa.

Last year South African exports to Saudi Arabia increased by 31 per cent over the previous year to 428 rand (\$91 million) while imports rose by 24 per cent to 933 million rand (\$198 million).

South African Defence Minister Joe Modise last month criticised South African newspapers for revealing details of the arms deal.

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